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Oct. 19, 1998

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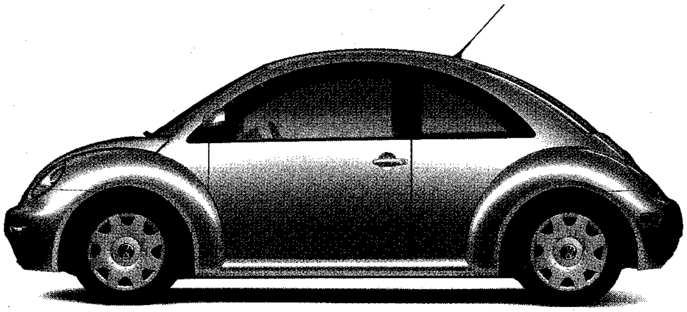

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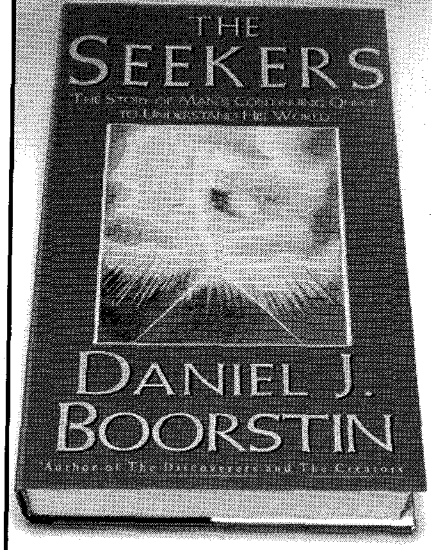
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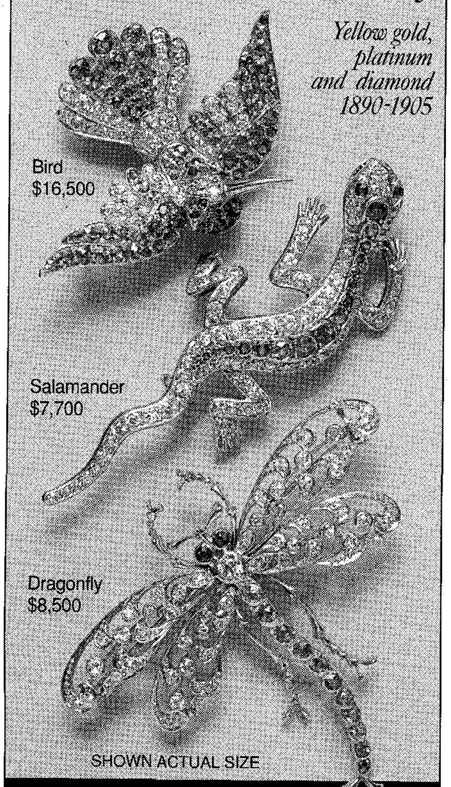

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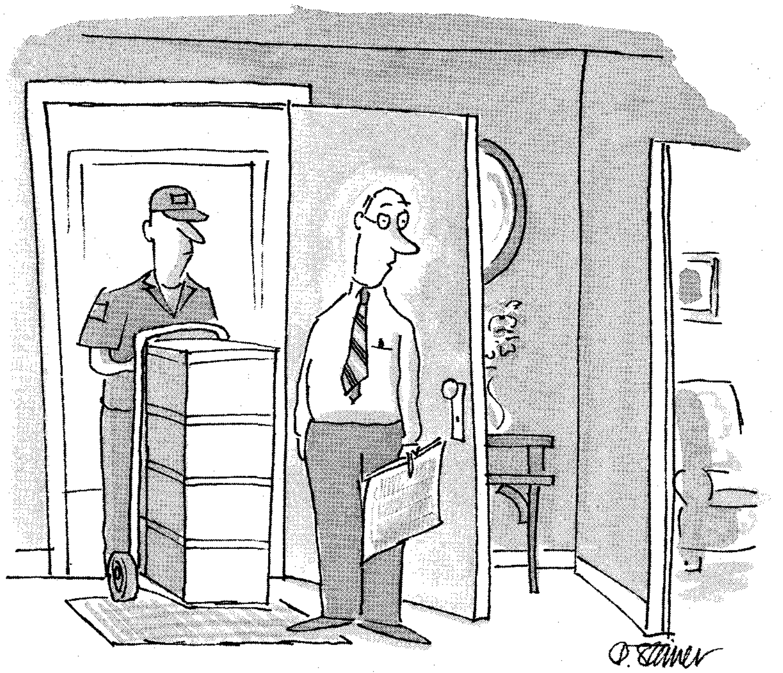

"Did you join the testimony-of-the-month club?"

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THE MAIL

PAINFUL QUESTIONS

Atul Gawande's "The Pain Perplex" (September 21st) prompts me to suggest another area for pain research. As a physical therapist, I have treated hundreds of repetitive-strain-injury sufferers, and I have concluded that there is a relation between certain personality traits and developing an R.S.I. The patients I've seen have been intensely competitive people who work longer, harder, faster, and neater than their pain-free coworkers. They also exhibit motor compulsions such as cracking their joints, and many are compulsive cleaners. (One woman told me that she'd worn out five vacuum cleaners in nine years.) Researchers should investigate the relationship between obsessive-compulsive disorders, heredity, and pain.

Grace Harstad
San Mateo, Calif.

Dr. Gawande writes, "Despite the fact that the number of people who engage in manual labor has steadily declined . . . more people have chronic back pain than have ever had it before." I don't doubt that there are many psychological and social reasons for this phenomenon, but I wonder if there isn't a physical explanation as well. As more people have spent their time working at computers or sitting in meetings, the muscles in their backs and stomachs may have atrophied, allowing them to become injured more easily than they might have in the past.

Candy Shue
San Francisco, Calif.

Atul Gawande notes that "a compassionate approach toward chronic pain means investigating its social coördinates"—including, I would add, the role of our society's gender bias. Multiple sclerosis, now clearly deemed an organic disorder, was viewed in the not too distant past as a psychogenic illness experienced by neurotic women; chronic-fatigue syndrome is now seen the same way. Gawande's interest is reassuring, but it is a fact that the biological basis of illness is often discounted if the illness is suffered mainly by women.

Judith A. Richman
Professor of Epidemiology in Psychiatry
University of Illinois at Chicago
Chicago, Ill.

MODERN ELIZABETHANS

I grew up in a county adjacent to the one where Tony Earley spent his childhood, and, from reading his account of the "quare" talk of the area (Personal History, September 21st), I think that we must be contemporaries. But while Earley sees this talk as romantic, I have another view: just as the language was stuck in another time period, so were the region's mores. Under all the romance, there is a subtext of sloth in speech, a lack of modern civility, mean-spiritedness, even violence. The language is Elizabethan, but so is the culture.

Ken Blackwell
Richmond, Va.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Reading Julian Barnes on the terrifying lack of specific direction in the great Elizabeth David's recipes (Books, September 21st), I was reminded of something the late Jessica Mitford told me. Unlike E.D., "Decca" was an appalling cook, but the two women were close in age and from similar backgrounds. When asked to contribute a recipe to her daughter's P.T.A. cookbook, Decca sent the following:

Roast Duck
Take a duck and roast it until it's done.

Natasha Richardson
New York City

Correction: In "The Insider's Outsider" (September 21st), we reported on the auction of a Charles James dress in 1996. The auction house was given incorrectly: the dress was sold at Doyle Galleries.

•

Letters should be sent with the writer's name, address, and daytime phone number to "The Mail," The New Yorker, 20 West 43rd Street, New York, N.Y. 10036. They can also be faxed to 212-840-8489 or sent via E-mail to themail@newyorker.com. Letters may be edited for length and clarity, and may be published in any medium; we regret that owing to the volume of correspondence we cannot reply to every letter.

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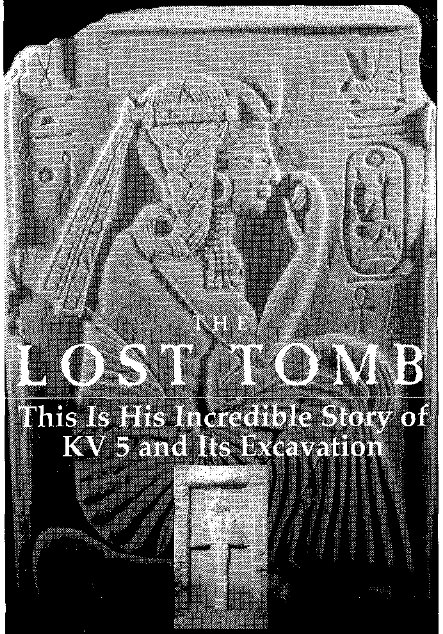

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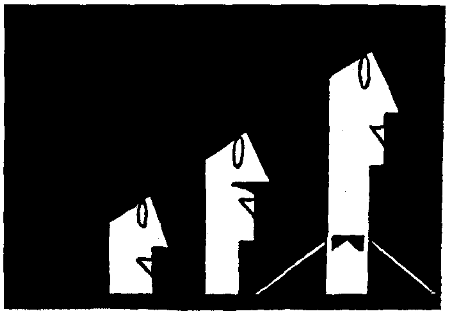

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

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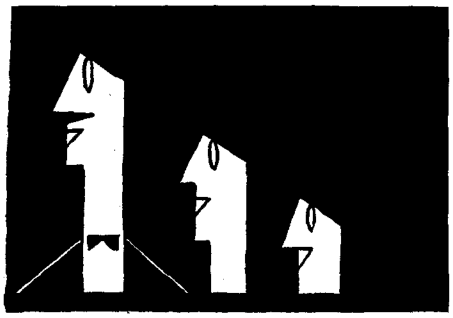


THE THEATRE

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.)

The After-Dinner Joke—A play by Caryl Churchill, which premièred on BBC television in 1978, about a woman who makes the leap from the private to the public sector. In previews through Oct. 15. Opens Oct. 16 at 8 and continues through Oct. 31. (Currican, 154 W. 29th St. 462-9279.)

Footloose—A musical adaptation of the 1984 film about a small town where dancing has been banned, co-written by Dean Pitchford (who also wrote the screenplay) and Walter Bobbie. With music by Tom Snow and lyrics by Mr. Pitchford. In previews. (Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 307-4100.)

Getting and Spending—An idealistic investment banker charged with insider trading must convince a lawyer turned monk to defend her, in a play by Michael J. Chepiga. John Tillinger is the director. In previews. (Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

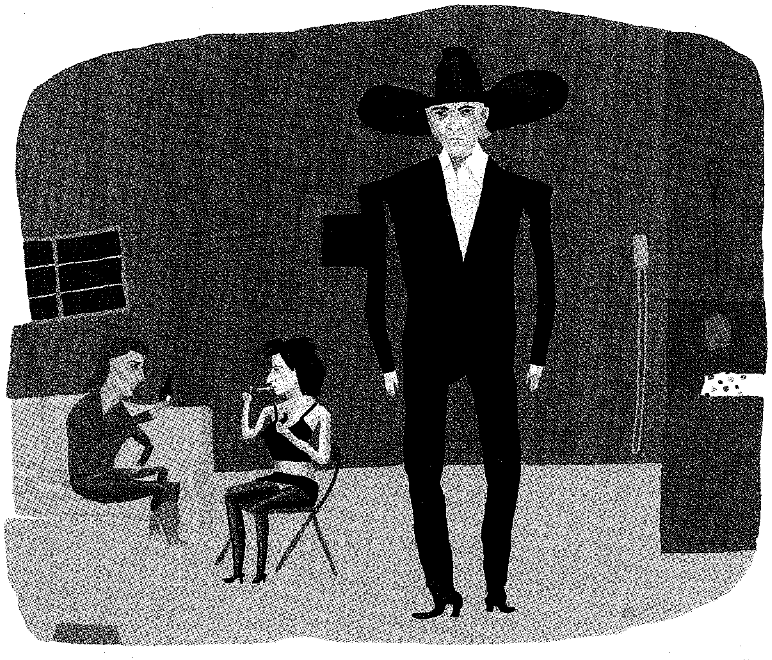
Impossible Marriage—Holly Hunter leads the cast of Beth Henley's new drama, set in Savannah, about a young woman's marriage to a philandering older man. Stephen Wadsworth is the director. Two previews on Oct. 14. Opens Oct. 15 at 7:30. (Laura Pels, Broadway at 45th St. 719-1300.)

Killer Joe—Tracy Letts's black comedy, which is set in a Texas trailer park, stars Scott Glenn and Amanda Plummer. In previews through Oct. 17. Opens Oct. 18 at 7. (Soho Playhouse, 15 Vandam St. 239-6200.)

Little Me—Martin Short returns to Broadway to star with Faith Prince in a revival of the 1962 musical comedy by Neil Simon (book), Cy Coleman (music), and Carolyn Leigh (lyrics). Direction and choreography are by Rob Marshall. In previews. (Roundabout, Broadway at 45th St. 719-1300.)

More to Love: A Big Fat Comedy—Jack O'Brien is the director of a new play by Rob Bartlett (a writer and performer on the radio show "Imus in the Morning"), who stars as an overweight comic rethinking his life. Joyce Van Patten and Dana Reeve co-star. Two previews on Oct. 14. Opens Oct. 15 at 6:45. (Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 239-6200.)

The Old Settler—Leslie Uggams leads the cast in a drama by John Henry Redwood, set in Harlem in the forties, in which the lives of two middle-aged sisters are disrupted when they take in a young boarder. In previews. (Primary Stages, 354 W. 45th St. 333-4052.)



Mike Shannon, Amanda Plummer, and Scott Glenn, in "Killer Joe."

On the Town—The New York Shakespeare Festival's revival of the 1943 Comden and Green classic, with music by Leonard Bernstein, makes its move to Broadway. George C. Wolfe is the director, Keith Young the choreographer. Previews begin Oct. 20. (Gershwin, 51st St. west of Broadway. 307-4100.)

Pericles—The Public opens the season with Shakespeare's tragicomedy. Brian Kulick is the director. In previews. (425 Lafayette St. 260-2400.)

Premium Bob—The comedy duo returns to New York for a monthlong engagement of their new show. Opens Oct. 16 at 10. Continues Wednesdays through Fridays, through Nov. 13. (Flea Theatre, 41 White St. 226-0051.)

P.S. 122—Oct. 14-18 at 8:30: "Herstory of Porn: Reel to Reel," the performance artist and former porn star Annie Sprinkle's interactive film history of her own twenty-five-year career. Through Nov. 1. . . . ¶ Oct. 15-18 at 7:30: "Total Fictional Lie," the latest work by the experimental-theatre troupe Elevator Repair Service. Through Nov. 8. (150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288.)

Retribution—Dennis Christopher and Jack Laufer portray a pair of Auschwitz survivors who meet again in New York in the sixties, in a drama by Mark R. Shapiro, based on the novel "Who Shall Live, Who Shall Die," by Daniel Stern. In previews. (Lamb's, 130 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

This Is Our Youth—A dark comedy by Kenneth Lonergan, originally staged in 1996 by the New Group, about three postadolescent Upper West Siders (Mark Ruffalo, Missy Yager, and Mark Rosenthal) in possession of a wad of stolen parental cash. Mark Brokaw is the director. Previews begin Oct. 15. (Second Stage, Broadway at 76th St. 873-6103.)

Wolf Lullaby—The Atlantic Theatre Company's season opener is a drama by Australian playwright Hilary Bell, in which a nine-year-old is accused of murdering another child. Directed by Neil Pepe. In previews. (336 W. 20th St. 239-6200.)

The World Mysteries: The Mysteries of Eleusis—The writer and director Vasilios Calitsis's multimedia examination of ancient ritual incorporates elements of Greek tragedy, Kabuki, Noh, flamenco, and Chinese opera. Oct. 14-17 at 7:30 and Oct. 18 at 3. (BAM's Majestic Theatre, 651 Fulton St., Brooklyn. 718-636-4100.)

OPENED RECENTLY

Binlids—A drama about Northern Ireland's struggle with Great Britain, written and performed by a group of women and men from West Belfast. Pam Brighton is the director. (Angel Orensanz Center Foundation for the Arts, 172 Norfolk St. 307-4100. Closes Oct. 23.)

Collected Stories—In a splendid performance, Uta Hagen plays an aging writer who tells her protégée (Lorca Simons) the one story about her own life which she hasn't written. Complications, naturally, ensue. Unfortunately, other than providing a showcase for Ms. Hagen, this revival of Donald Margulies's 1997 drama only points out how poorly constructed the relationship between the two women is. (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 239-6200.)

Communicating Doors—A wonderful farce with a fairy-tale ending, by Alan Ayckbourn. As with all good farce, the central conceit is serious and quite ridiculous at the same time; in this case, it involves murder and time travel. (Variety Arts, Third Ave. at 13th St. 239-6200.)

Corpus Christi—Terrence McNally's new drama tells the story of a young gay wayfarer on a spiritual journey with his twelve followers. Joe Mantello is the director. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212.)

Dinah Was—Oliver Goldstick's play about the late blues singer Dinah Washington, starring Lillias White. (Gramercy Theatre, 127 E. 23rd St. 307-4100.)

Duet! A Romantic Fable—A return engagement of the Adobe Theatre Company's staging of Gregory Jackson and Erin Quinn Purcell's comedy. (Actors' Playhouse, 100 Seventh Ave. S. 239-6200.)

The Dying Gaul—A five-week, encore staging of Craig Lucas's latest drama, in which a married Hollywood producer seduces a naïve young writer whose screenplay he wants to buy. (Vineyard Theatre, 108 E. 15th St. 353-3874. Closes Oct. 25.)

Girl Gone—A new mind-bender from Mac Wellman, directed by Paul Lazar, and with choreography by Annie B. Parson. (Flea Theatre, 41 White St. 226-0051. Closes Oct. 31.)

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House/Lights—A work in progress from the Wooster Group, adapted from the Gertrude Stein opera "Dr. Faustus Lights the Lights." (Performing Garage, 33 Wooster St. 966-3651. Closes Oct. 25.)

Marco Polo Sings a Solo—This is not naturalism. This is not situation comedy. This is a cartoon of John Guare's unconscious, the first offering in a series of his works at the Signature Theatre. The 1976 play—set at the end of the millennium on an iceberg, where a filmmaker is finishing a movie about Marco Polo—is a kind of slapstick tragedy in which Ibsen and Ionesco seem to have got married. It's one of the playwright's more sprawling, abstract works, where metaphor and voice don't live so congenially together, but the experience is still fascinating. (Reviewed in our issue of 10/12/98.) (555 W. 42nd St. 244-7529. Closes Oct. 25.)

The Mystery of Irma Vep—A revival of Charles Ludlam's 1984 camp thriller, directed by and starring Everett Quinton (who appeared with Ludlam in the original Ridiculous Theatrical Company production). Stephen DeRosa is also in the cast. With sets by John Lee Beatty and costumes by William Ivey Long. (Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 239-6200.)

A Night in November—A one-man drama starring Dan Gordon and written by Marie Jones, which is set on the night of the 1994 World Cup qualifying soccer match between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. (Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-6200.)

Nunsense A-Men—An all-male version of Dan Goggin's 1985 musical comedy, "Nunsense." (47th Street Theatre, 304 W. 47th St. 239-6200.)

Oedipus—Billy Crudup and Frances McDormand star in Dare Clubb's retelling of the Greek myth. A Blue Light Theatre Company production. (CSC Theatre, 136 E. 13th St. 279-4200. Closes Oct. 25.)

Over the River and Through the Woods—In Joe DiPietro's new comedy, a young man planning his future clashes with his four Italian-American grandparents, who have ideas of their own on the subject. (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 239-6200.)

Power Plays—Three short plays, two written by Elaine May and one by Alan Arkin, who originally performed them with Jeannie Berlin and Anthony Arkin, their respective offspring. Richard Benjamin and Paula Prentiss have taken over for Alan Arkin and Ms. May. (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 580-1313.)

Sakina's Restaurant—Aasif Mandvi portrays six characters in his one-man exploration of the South Asian community in New York. (American Place, 111 W. 46th St. 239-6200.)

Snapshots '98—An evening of one-acts from the Worth Street Theatre: "Imagining Brad," by Peter Hedges, and "The Cardinal Detoxes," by Tom Disch. (Tribeca Playhouse, 111 Reade St. 604-4195. Closes Oct. 18.)

Stupid Kids—The WPA Theatre's production of John C. Russell's dark comedy of suburban-teen angst. Michael Mayer is the director. (Century Theatre, 111 E. 15th St. 239-6200.)

Swan Lake—The British choreographer Matthew Bourne's he-swan interpretation of the Tchaikovsky ballet comes to Broadway. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 307-4100.)

Symphonie Fantastique—Abstract puppets underwater, set to the music of Berlioz. A peerless, delightful evening. (HERE, 145 Sixth Ave., near Spring St. 647-0202.)

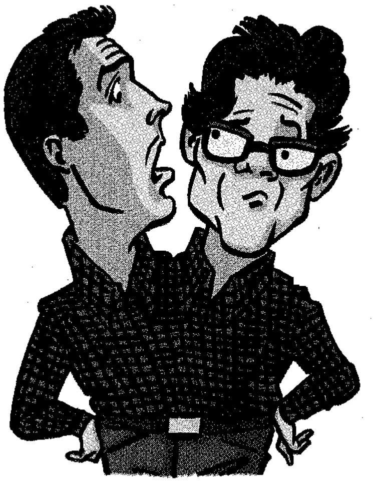
'Til the Rapture Comes—A domestic drama set in a small West Virginia town, written by Edward Napier, a native of the state. (WPA Theatre, 519 W. 23rd St. 206-0523.)

The Uneasy Chair The owner of a boarding house (Dana Ivey) in Victorian London sues her ill-tempered boarder (Roger Rees), in a new comedy by Evan Smith. (Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 279-4200. Closes Oct. 25.)

Villa Villa—Theatre as mosh pit. The Argentinean troupe De La Guarda herds you into a crowded space, performs undistinguished rock music, swings on ropes over your head, and splashes you until you're drenched. (Daryl Roth, 20 Union Sq. E., at 15th St. 239-6200.)

Wit—MCC Theatre presents the Long Wharf Theatre's staging of a dark comedy by Margaret Edson, in which a woman with cancer (Kathleen Chalfant) finds solace in the sonnets of John Donne. (120 W. 28th St. 727-7765. Closes Oct. 31.)

Zingaro—The French equestrian troupe returns to New York with "Eclipse," a new show featuring twenty-six horses, eighteen performers, and a Korean folk-music ensemble. (Big Top at Battery Park City. 718-636-4100.)



PREMIUM BOB: *The weird and original theatrical-comedy duo Premium Bob (Paul Boocock and David Latham) open their new show, "Dobie McDobie," this week at the Flea Theatre (Oct. 16). Taking their cue from television news magazines, Boocock and Latham (guided by Gary Schwartz's spare, sure direction) embark on a breakneck series of mini-scenes held together not by a traditional narrative thread (two beavers taste-testing wood, for instance, suddenly morph into chainsaw-armed men in a logrolling duel) but by the duo's fascinations with pop culture and wordplay, with the broad and subtle possibilities of physical comedy, and, ultimately, with the malleability of language and experience. Imagine Andy Kaufman meets Monty Python, plus a pinch of the Marquis de Sade. (41 White St. 226-0051.)*

CHRISTOPH NIEMANN

LONG RUNS

ART: Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **BEAUTY AND THE BEAST:** Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 307-4100. . . . **THE BEAUTY QUEEN OF LEENANE:** Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 239-6200. . . . **BLUE MAN GROUP/TUBES:** Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370. . . . **BRING IN DA NOISE, BRING IN DA FUNK:** Ambassador, 219 W. 49th St. 239-6200. . . . **CABARET:** Kit Kat Klub, 124 W. 43rd St. 719-1300. . . . **CATS:** Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200. . . . **CHICAGO:** Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **THE FANTASTICKS:** Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838. . . . **FORBIDDEN BROADWAY STRIKES BACK!:** Stardust, Broadway at 51st St. 239-6200. . . . **HEDWIG AND THE ANGRY INCH:** Jane Street Theatre, Hotel Riverview Ballroom, 113 Jane St. 239-6200. . . . **I LOVE YOU, YOU'RE PERFECT, NOW CHANGE:** Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 239-6200. . . . **JEKYLL & HYDE:** Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **LATE-NITE CATECHISM:** St. Luke's Church, 308 W. 46th St. 239-6200. . . . **THE LION KING:** New Amsterdam, 214 W. 42nd St. 307-4100. . . . **LES MISÉRABLES:** Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **MISS SAIGON:** Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200. . . . **PERFECT CRIME:** Duffy, 1553 Broadway, at 46th St. 695-3401. . . . **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA:** Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **RAGTIME:** Ford Center for the Performing Arts, 213 W. 42nd St. 307-4100. . . . **R & J:** John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 354-2220. . . . **RENT:** Nederlander, 208 W. 41st St. 921-8000. . . . **THE SCARLET PIMPERNEL:** Minskoff, 45th St. west of Broadway. 307-4100. . . . **SECRETS EVERY SMART TRAVELER SHOULD KNOW:** Triad, 158 W. 72nd St. 799-4599. . . . **SMOKEY JOE'S CAFÉ:** Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 239-6200. . . . **THE SOUND OF MUSIC:** Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **STOMP:** Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at St. Marks Pl. 477-2477. . . . **TITANIC:** Lunt-Fontanne, 205 W. 46th St. 307-4100. . . . **TONY N' TINA'S WEDDING:** St. Luke's Church, 308 W. 46th St. 239-6200.

DANCE

Madrid's Ballet Ullate—The company founded by former Béjart dancer Victor Ullate presents two programs: a full-length version of "Don Quixote" and a slate of repertory works. (City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212. Oct. 13 at 7:30, Oct. 14-16 at 8, Oct. 17 at 2 and 8, and Oct. 18 at 2 and 7.)

Cisne Negro Dance Company—The São Paulo-based company offers four works, including "Beyond the Skin," choreographed by Patrick Delcroix, and "Impromptu," by Tindaro Silvano. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. Oct. 13-16 at 8, Oct. 17 at 2 and 8, and Oct. 18 at 2 and 7:30.)

"Froot Alone"—The dancer, saxophonist, and performance artist Dan Froot performs a suite of solo works, with and without sax and clothing. (Dance Theatre Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. 924-0077. Oct. 15-17 at 8 and Oct. 18 at 3.)

Global Exchange: Marta Renzi and Anna Sedlackova—The choreographer Marta Renzi returns to the New York stage after an eight-year hiatus (during which she worked frequently with community groups in site-specific pieces) with "Long Distance Dialogues," created in collaboration with the Slovakian dancers Anna Sedlackova, Peter Groll, and Eva Gajdosova. (Danspace Project, St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. 674-8194. Oct. 15-18 at 8:30.)

"The Story of Tap"—The director and choreographer Hank Smith hosts a series of lecture-demonstrations featuring gifted hoofers and sage figures from tap history. Oct. 16 at 7:30: Buster Brown, Leroy Myers, and Henry (Phace) Roberts consider the legacy of the Copasetics. . . . ¶ Oct. 17 at 7:30: Step dancer Jo McNamara explores the Irish influence on the art form. (Dixon Place, 258 Bowery, near Houston St. 219-3088.)

Complexions—The choreographic team of Dwight Rhoden and Desmond Richardson presents such repertory pieces as "Naked Perfume" and "Play" (the latter with Eli Fountain and his Percussion Discussion), and the second act of "Saturation." (Hostos Center for the Arts and Culture, 500 Grand Concourse, the Bronx. 718-518-4455. Oct. 16-17 at 8.)

Raj Kapoor Ensemble—The fourteen-member company performs a survey of folk dances from Nepal, including masked dances, highland Sherpa dances, a competitive love dance, and a classical dance of devotion to divine female power. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400. Oct. 17 at 8.)

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Sarah McLachlan
Surfacing
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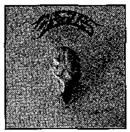

Eagles
Their Greatest Hits 1971-1975
(Asylum) **287003**

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Songs From "Ally McBeal" feat. Vonda Shepard (550 Music) **244509**

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The Carpenters
Love Songs
(A&M) **244582**

All Saints
(London) **243097**

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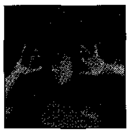
(Polydor) **424721**



Tori Amos
From The Choirgirl Hotel
(Atlantic) **241455**

Third Eye Blind
(Elektra) **188151**

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Backstreet Boys
(Enhanced CD)
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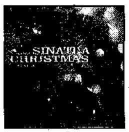
"Godzilla"
The Wallflowers, Puff Daddy feat. Jimmy Page, more. (Sony Music Sndtk) **249342**



Frank Sinatra
The Sinatra Christmas Album
(Reprise) **112946**

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Matchbox 20
Yourself Or Someone Like You
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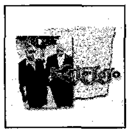
Dixie Chicks
Wide Open Spaces
(Monument) **234757**

Fleetwood Mac

Fleetwood Mac
The Dance
(Reprise) **217869**

brian mcknight

Brian McKnight
Anytime
(Mercury) **221879**



K-Ci & Jojo
Love Always
(MCA) **213306**

KENNY G GREATEST HITS

Kenny G Greatest Hits
(Arista) **233627**

Cherry Poppin' Daddies
Zoot Suit Riot...
(Mojo/Universal) **252908**

'N Sync
(RCA) **244202**

Next
Rated Next (Arista) 🅴 **233890**

Trisha Yearwood
Songbook: A Collection Of Hits (MCA Nashville) **219436**

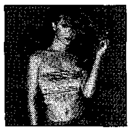
NATALIE IMBRUGLIA

Natalie Imbruglia
Left Of The Middle
(RCA) **238329**

WILL SMITH
BIG WILLIE STYLE

Will Smith
Big Willie Style
(Columbia) **231365**

Garth Brooks
Sevens
(Capitol) **232207**



Mariah Carey
Butterfly
(Columbia) **221499**

ELTON JOHN
THE BIG PICTURE

Elton John
The Big Picture
(Rocket/A&M) **221598**

Gloria Estefan
Gloria!
(Epic) **249359**

Eric Clapton
Pilgrim
(Reprise) **239145**

Shania Twain—The Woman In Me (Mercury/Nashville)	**119768**
Michael Bolton—This Is The Time: The Christmas Album (Enhanced CD) (Columbia)	**169631**
Jewel—Pieces Of You (Atlantic)	**137463**
Creedence Clearwater Revival—Chronicle: The 20 Greatest Hits (Fantasy)	**308049**
Masé—Harlem World (Bad Boy/Arista) 🅴	**228213**
Jeff Foxworthy—Totally Committed (Warner Bros.)	**245498**
Dave Matthews Band—Crash (RCA)	**156703**
Billy Joel®—Grt. Hits, Vol. III (Columbia)	**219626**
Brian Setzer Orchestra—The Dirty Boogie (Interscope)	**253476**
"My Best Friend's Wedding"—Diana King, Tony Bennett, more. (Work)	**214759**
Barbra Streisand's Christmas Album (Columbia)	**309351**
Paula Cole—This Fire (Imago/Warner Bros.)	**170035**
Eve 6 (RCA)	**245431**
Elvis Presley—Greatest Jukebox Hits (RCA)	**224303**
Erykah Badu—Live (Kedar/Universal)	**230870**
Jon B.—Cool Relax (Yab Yum/550 Music)	**221853**
Styx—Grt. Hits: Time Stands Still (Remast.) (A&M)	**136721**
George Strait—Carrying Your Love With Me (MCA Nashville)	**188631**
Enya—Paint The Sky With Stars: Best Of (Reprise)	**231316**
Usher—My Way (LaFace) 🅴	**224246**
Hanson—Middle Of Nowhere (Mercury)	**194480**
Deana Carter—Did I Shave My Legs For This? (Capitol Nashville)	**166397**
Marcy Playground (Capitol)	**232801**
Green Day—Nimrod (Reprise)	**226001**
Pure Disco 2—Barry White, Village People, more. (A&M/Polydor)	**242982**
Madonna—The Immaculate Collection (Sire/Warner Bros.)	**414557**
Meat Loaf—Bat Out Of Hell (Epic)	**279133**
Ben Folds Five—Whatever And Ever Amen (550 Music)	**185371**
Wyclef Jean (featuring Refugee Allstars)—The Carnival (Ruffhouse/Columbia)	**215244**
Puff Daddy & The Family—No Way Out (Bad Boy/Arista) 🅴	**215202**

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NIGHT LIFE

CONCERTS

Elton John—Costume changes, boas, and other Liberace-style excesses. In other words, a great show. (Madison Square Garden. 307-7171. Oct. 14 and Oct. 17-18 at 8.)

Insane Clown Posse—The "controversial" rap act that wears face paint and incites rowdy behavior. In truth, this shrewdly marketed band is about as threatening as Goofy. (Roseland, 239 W. 52nd St. 307-7171. Oct. 15 at 8.)

Aerosmith—The swivel-hipped, balloon-lipped Steven Tyler will swagger on forever. (Jones Beach Theatre. 516-221-1000. Oct. 15 at 8.)

Joshua Redman—Redman's new "Timeless Tales (for Changing Times)" mixes Irving Berlin with Prince and Bob Dylan with Gershwin in a repertoire that makes perfect sense from a jazzman who came of age in the seventies. The recordings are unfortunately on the wan side, but the youthful magic that brought Redman fame and fortune should be apparent in a live setting. (Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. 355-6160. Oct. 15 at 8.)

Tony Bennett and the Count Basie Orchestra—Bennett is still one classy guy, even though his new album finds him duetting with Kermit the Frog, Elmo, and Rosie O'Donnell. Bennett's irrepressible buoyancy saves even those tracks, and in concert, unencumbered (we hope) by special guests, he can still rock a house. His generosity of spirit, good humor, and gorgeously mellowed tones are something to experience. With the Squirrel Nut Zippers. (Radio City Music Hall, Sixth Ave. at 50th St. 247-4777. Oct. 17 at 8.)

Eva Meier—The German singer and actress offers cabaret songs that are Brecht poems set to music, including classics by Weill and more obscure, acerbic numbers by Eisler. Her evenly attractive voice may prove detrimental in this repertoire, but a powerful sense of verbal inflection promises to keep her interpretations from descending into prettiness. Until a new Dietrich, Lenya, or May shows up, lovers of this musical form should be thankful for Meier's dedication to the perishable art of the Berlin cabaret. (Castillo Theatre, 500 Greenwich St. 941-1234. Oct. 17 at 10 and Oct. 18 at 4.)

CLUBS

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which boldface type indicates some of the more notable performers in town. Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it's advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.)

Bottom Line, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—Oct. 16: Billed as "The British Invasion Revisited," this extra-special evening features some of Uncle Sam's finest songwriters—**Richard Barone, Marshall Crenshaw**, and **Willie Nile**, with an Irishman (**Pierce Turner**) for good measure—playing songs of the mid-sixties. Oct. 17: The fierce and uncompromising blues-and-folk singer **Toshi Reagon**.

Bowery Ballroom, 6 Delancey St. (533-2111)—Oct. 15-17: **They Might Be Giants** carry on (with John Flansburgh's trio **Mono Puff** sitting in on Oct. 17).

CBGB & OMFUG, 315 Bowery, at Bleecker St. (982-4052)—Oct. 20: **Vanilla Ice**. The rapper turned heavy-metal troglodyte continues his tragic attempt at midcareer metamorphosis.

Chicago B.L.U.E.S., 73 Eighth Ave., at 13th St. (924-9755)—Oct. 16-17: Sometime Chuck Berry pianist **Johnnie Johnson** lays it down.

Coney Island High, 15 St. Marks Pl. (674-7959)—Oct. 16: **Ronnie Spector**, the indelible voice of the Ronettes, makes an East Village pit stop.

Irving Plaza, 17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (777-6800)—Oct. 17: The soberingly inane sounds of **Semisonic**, the Minneapolis band that has given us the hit "Closing Time."

Jimmy's Bronx Café, 281 W. Fordham Rd. (718-329-2000)—A common complaint about New York City night life is that all the good dance floors have vanished, that today's clubs lack the vibrant dancers, beautiful patrons, and high-energy atmosphere of days gone by. Well, they haven't been to Jimmy's. If you want to dance, why not do it right? Raul Acosta, India, Fernandito Villalona, and Gilberto Santa Rosa are just some of the renowned musicians and orchestras that perform on weekend nights at this five-year-old Caribbean restaurant and night club with an airplane-hangar-size dance floor. (And Yankees Derek Jeter, Bernie Williams, and, just maybe, Shane Spencer are some of the patrons you could run into there.) Break out your finest outfit, show up after midnight, and get ready to swivel until daybreak.

Knitting Factory, 74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (219-3055)—Oct. 14-15: **Martin Sexton**. Oct. 16: Former Minutemen bassist **Mike Watt** fronts his own avant-rock ensemble.

Life, 158 Bleecker St. (420-1999.)—Oct. 14: The Ramones may have gone the way of the dodo, but drummer **Marky Ramone** still pummels the skins. He leads his own band, the Intruders.

Maxwell's, 1039 Washington St., Hoboken (201-798-0406)—Oct. 16: Former Television front man **Tom Verlaine** joins guitarist **Jimmy Ripp** in an instrumental performance. Oct. 17: **Mike Watt** (see the Knitting Factory) and the surprisingly low-key sounds of the obnoxiously named **Fuck**.

Mercury Lounge, 217 E. Houston St. (260-4700)—Oct 15: **Fuck** (see Maxwell's). Oct. 17: The guitar-driven, noirish instrumental music of **Lazy Boy**. Oct. 19: **Rasputina**.

Tonic, 107 Norfolk St. (358-7503)—Oct. 18: **Fountains of Wayne**. Named after a statuary shop in their native suburban New Jersey, this immensely gifted four-piece band has an easygoing, Beatle-esque sound that's so melodic it's almost unfashionable.

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

Birdland, 315 W. 44th St. (581-3080)—Oct. 14-17: The **Jim Hall** quartet. Hall, our premier jazz guitarist, doesn't have to share the stage with anyone, but he's obviously a generous guy. He recorded his latest album, "By Arrangement," with Pat Metheny, Greg Osby, New York Voices, and Joe Lovano, and they've been invited to join him. Dining.

Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—Through Oct. 18: **Max Roach and the So What Brass Five**. Now a sprightly septuagenarian, drum titan Roach has yet to stop exploring diverse musical vistas and play it safe. The So What Brass Five's crisp orchestrations match Roach's punctilious approach to rhythm. Oct. 19: The **John Tropea** band. Dining.

Iridium, 44 W. 63rd St. (582-2121)—Through Oct. 18: The **Young Lions Octet**. The term "young lion" these days can refer to any player under fifty—this octet, for instance, has players in their late thirties as well as players in their teens. Saxophonists Donald Harrison and Javon Jackson are old hands, having come up in the eighties bands of Art Blakey, the grandfather of the Jazz Renaissance; trumpeter Nicholas Payton and guitarist Mark Whitfield are nineties stars; and vibraphonist Stephon Harris, pianist Sergio Salvatore, and the rhythm section, George Farmer and Kalil Bell, are freshly minted players in the process of establishing reputations. Mondays belong to electric-guitar innovator **Les Paul**. Dining.

Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St. (576-2232)—Through Oct. 18: **Ted Rosenthal**, a sturdy, sharp-witted pianist closely associated with the late Gerry Mulligan, has gathered some talented friends to celebrate the work of George Gershwin. Saxophonist **Dick Oatts** joins Rosenthal's trio on Wednesday; trumpeter **Randy Brecker**, now at the peak period of his thirty-plus-year career, comes in Thursday and Friday, while cult vocalist **Mark Murphy** gets Saturday night. Rosenthal's trio, with the excellent rhythm team of bassist **Dennis Irwin** and drummer **Kenny Washington**, shines alone on Tuesday and Sunday night.

Village Vanguard, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—Through Oct. 18: The **Lewis Nash** septet. Nash can lift a band clear off the stage with drum work that is the very essence of clean, modern swing. He's what all young bop drummers should aspire to be. The **Vanguard Jazz Orchestra** holds sway on Mondays.

ART

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

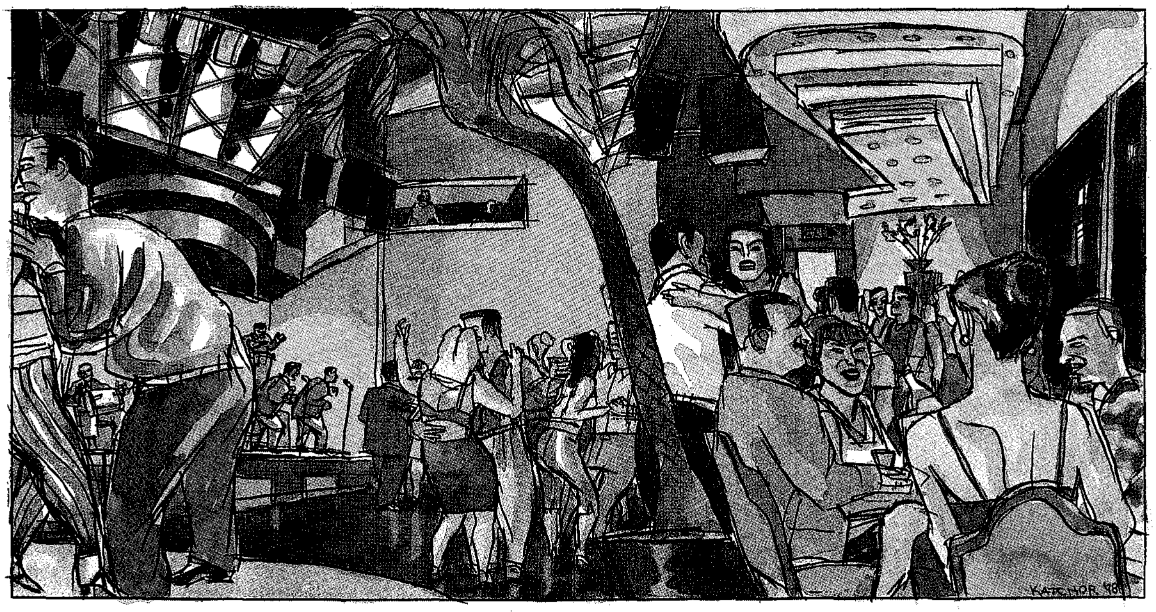
Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (879-5500)—"Edgar Degas, Photographer" gathers more than forty examples of the painter's photographic work. Through Jan. 3. . . . ¶ It's hard *not* to sound a bit breathless about "From Van Eyck to Bruegel." It's drawn entirely from the Met's own collection of early Netherlandish paintings, which is one of the world's finest. Many works will be familiar to regular visitors. Campin's landmark Merode Triptych, one of the earliest depictions of the Annunciation in a domestic setting, and Bruegel's lunching "Harvesters" astonish each time you see them. Several works not ordinarily on view, such as the stunning Memling portraits and a charming Annunciation by Petrus Christus—conventionally set on a church porch beside a humble, crumbling brick wall—would be prizes for most museums. Through Jan. 3. . . . ¶ "The Ceaseless Century: Three Hundred Years of Eighteenth-Century Fashion" displays period outfits with their typical extravagance of effects (petticoats, stomachers, corseted waists, panniered skirts, flared peplums, etc.) alongside examples of their continuing influence, from nineteenth-century ball gowns and walking dresses to Dior cocktail dresses and Vivienne Westwood pirate ensembles. Through Nov. 29. . . . ¶ "The Nature of Islamic Ornament, Part II: Vegetal Patterns" identifies components of the arabesque—vine scrolls, blossoms, split leaves, and palmettes—in plant motifs from the ninth century to the eighteenth. Through Jan. 10. . . . ¶ "Ellsworth Kelly on the Roof." Through late fall. . . . ¶ "The Direct Eye," a small and unassuming show devoted to the interplay between self-taught and mainstream artists in this century, includes works by Horace Pippin, Max Weber, and Alison Saar. Through Oct. 18. . . . ¶ "Jade in Ancient Costa Rica." Through Feb. 28. . . . ¶ "Sacred Visions: Early Paintings from Central Tibet." Through Jan. 17. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:30, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 9.)

Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—In a run-up to the big Jackson Pollock retrospective, the drawings department has gathered some eighty works by the New York School, from early Abstract Expressionist stuff by the young Rothko and Gorky to mature work by Rauschenberg and Johns. Pollock's evolution is in evidence here, from an early Surrealist "landscape"—a brilliantly colored, faintly horrifying abstract version of a Bosch garden—to 1950 ink splatters, big gestures on a small scale. Knowledge of the artists' paintings affects how one sees the drawings: in a pair of skeletal brush drawings by Philip Guston, for example, one misses his colors. But a tiny black-on-black composition by Ad Reinhardt is a perfect miniature of his best large-scale work. Through Jan. 12. . . . ¶ "The Best Animals Are the Flat Animals," a video installation by Diana Thater, projects shifting images of zebra herds and performing zebras which play behind the shadows cast by museumgoers. Through Nov. 10. (Open Saturdays through Tuesdays, and Thursdays, 10:30 to 6; Fridays, 10:30 to 8:30.)

Guggenheim Museum, Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (423-3500)—"Rendezvous: Masterpieces from the Centre Georges Pompidou and the Guggenheim Museums" presents works by Picasso, Matisse, Chagall, Kandinsky, and other modern masters. The joint exhibition allows side-by-side presentation of pieces usually separated by a transatlantic flight. Opens Oct. 16. (Open Sundays through Wednesdays, 10 to 6; Fridays and Saturdays, 10 to 8.)

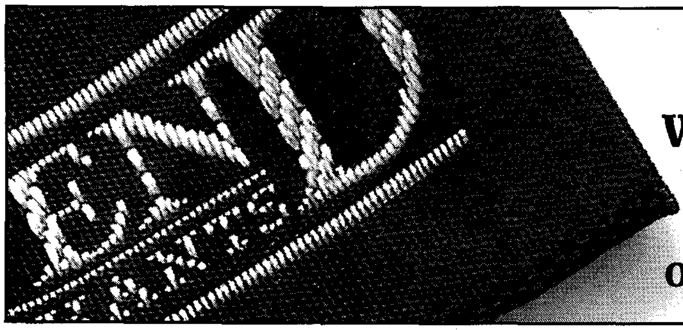
Whitney Museum of American Art, Madison Ave. at 75th St. (570-3676)—Like many of his Abstract Expressionist peers, Mark Rothko began his career making pictures indebted to European biomorphic Surrealism, before evolving his signature style of luminous, slightly spooky rectangles piled one above the other. The horizontal axis of Rothko's paintings suggests affinities with nineteenth-century Romantic landscapes; on the other hand, the broad expanses of color and severe geometric reduction look forward to the color-field and Minimalist art of the sixties. The temptation at this retrospective is to take a bath in Rothko's luxuriant palette—to see him as an AbEx Bonnard—but one should keep in mind that the artist allied his art with the timeless and the tragic. Through Nov. 29. . . . ¶ The first full-scale retrospective of the work of Bob Thompson, a psychedelic African-American appropriation artist whose brief and incendiary career was spent in the heyday of Abstract Expressionism. Through Jan. 3. (Open Wednesdays, and Fridays through Sundays, 11 to 6; Thursdays, 1 to 8.)

Brooklyn Museum of Art, Eastern Parkway (718-638-5000)—"Kerry James Marshall: Mementos" includes intricate and allusive paintings and sculptures (as well as a new site-specific installation) by an artist whose work is informed by the civil-rights violence he witnessed in Birmingham, Alabama, in 1963, and Watts, in 1965. Through Nov. 29. . . . ¶ "Martin Lewis's World: Cityscapes



The late-night crowd moves to the rhythms of merengue and salsa on the dance floor at Jimmy's Bronx Café.

BEN KATCHOR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on Paper'' compares New York cityscapes by the printmaker (1881-1962) with photographs on the same subject by some of his contemporaries. Through Oct. 25. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays, 11 to 9; and Sundays, 11 to 6.)

Dia Center for the Arts, 548 W. 22nd St. (989-5566)—''Excursus: Homage to the Square^3,'' Robert Irwin's reconfiguration of ''Prologue: x18^3,'' his installation here last spring. Irwin, the preëminent artist of the California Light and Space movement, creates extraordinary effects through small variations in material. He again uses translucent scrims to divide the museum's third floor into eighteen rooms, but this time he has changed his lighting fixtures. In ''Prologue,'' he combined white fluorescents with natural light coming through the windows to create subtle shifts as one navigated the chambers. In the current installation, he has introduced colored fluorescent lights. The mysterious sense of dematerialization remains, but the shifting hues produce greater drama. Like its predecessor, this is one of the most beautiful exhibitions in New York in years. . . . ¶ ''Joseph Beuys: Drawings After the Codices Madrid of Leonardo da Vinci, and Sculpture.'' Although it makes use of the museum's extensive Beuys holdings, this exhibition nevertheless has a paltry and depressing air. The drawings, inspired by Leonardo's sketchbooks, are adequate, albeit somewhat opaque, while the sculptures, employing the artist's stock fetishistic materials (felt, copper, iron) are ungainly in the extreme. Opinion remains divided over the artist's legacy. For many, Beuys (1921-86) is the most significant artist of the past few decades, embodying revolutionary and utopian aspirations for art and society in his often cryptic works; others regard his shamanistic posturings as hokey and fraudulent. This show does little to clarify the debate, as the works on view are among the artist's least compelling. (Open Thursdays through Sundays, noon to 6.)

Frick Collection, 1 E. 70th St. (288-0700)—''Victorian Fairy Painting'' presents canvases that indulge the Romantic taste for naturalistic renderings of intricate fantasy worlds, by such masters of the genre as Richard Dadd, Joseph Noël Patton, and John Anster Fitzgerald. For the most part, the thirty-some examples here prove far more sinister and mysterious than pretty and escapist, especially the intense ''Fairy Feller's Master Stroke,'' which Dadd completed in the insane asylum. Through Jan. 17. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 6; Sundays, 1 to 6.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

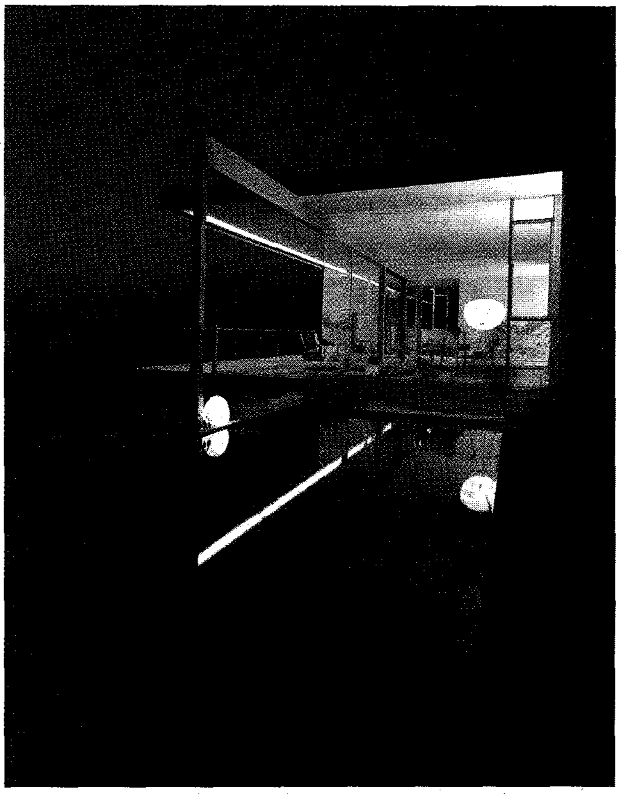
Frank Auerbach / Rackstraw Downes—Boldly composed paintings and drawings that balance gesture and psychological penetration in the grand Expressionist manner. The insights of the pencil studies, pared down through erasure, rival those of the finished portraits. A series of canvases of the view from the artist's studio in Camden Town, London, executed in heavy impasto with a subtly shifting palette, recall Monet's serial paintings of haystacks, focussing the emphasis inward, on the artist's eye. / Painstakingly finished drawings, torn from the pad and tacked on the wall, by this noted painter of urban and industrial scenes. Both shows through Oct. 31. (Marlborough, 40 W. 57th St. 541-4900.)

Arthur B. Davies (1862-1928)—These golden, idyllic landscapes, stiffly inhabited by classical figures in modest poses, make a pallid impression when compared with their counterparts in European symbolism; one senses that the artist never believed in this dreamlike Arcadia. Davies was one of the principal organizers of the sensational Armory Show of 1913, and his exposure to the fresh air of modernism led him to further timid experiments, this time in Cubism, represented here by the Fauve-hued ''Day of Good Fortune.'' Through Oct. 23. (Babcock, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 767-1852.)

Alan Feltus—Contemporary figures, flatly painted in narrative vignettes borrowed from the Italian Renaissance. In ''First Coffee,'' a couple pose over their cups in an angular, dramatic stasis, like minor figures in a Biblical scene by Giotto. In ''Last Dance,'' a boy with a rose approaches an older woman in a sterile interior whose only decoration is a forlorn strip of pennants. The ironic resonance between classical forms and contemporary alienation is deafening, but the paintings lack juice, rather like Balthus with all the perversity drained off—which doesn't leave much. Through Oct. 24. (Forum, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 355-4545.)

Lawrence Gipe—Monumental paintings that expose the naïveté and hypocrisy of industrial idealism in the period between the World Wars. The centerpiece of the show is ''Twentieth Century Limited,'' a flashy, thirty-two-foot-long mural of gleaming emblems of utopian design—Rockefeller Center, a crackling cyclotron, a futuristic locomotive and airplane—with the muzzle of a cannon in the middle, pointed directly at the viewer. A sepia-toned painting of a train chugging away from the station is called ''Departure (Berlin 1940)'': the viewer knows exactly where that train is heading. Through Oct. 31. (Helman, 20 W. 57th St. 245-2888.)

Betye Saar / Charmion von Weigand (1896-1983)—Savage satires of racism, combining Depression-era washboards and so-called ''black collectibles,'' racist toys and mammy figurines that Saar has armed with guns and slogans. In ''Lo'd A' Massy, Miss Ann, I Sho' Gots Som'thin' Fo' Yo','' Aunt Jemima totes an automatic rifle, above the stencilled message ''Extreme times call for extreme heroines.'' Nothing subtle about the works, but they possess a raw eloquence that won't be denied. / Small, competently executed abstract collages by a minor American follower of Mondrian. Both shows through Oct. 31. (Rosenfeld, 24 W. 57th St. 247-0082.)



''Chuey House'' (1958), by Julius Shulman, at Richardson.

Sheldon Tapley—Pastel still-lifes jammed with fruit, flowers, doughnuts, birds' nests, money, tools, and many miscellaneous references to art history, in the form of tacked-up posters and postcards. Tapley's works are intelligently composed and executed with polished skill, but for all the surface richness they remain arid and muted. The large, overstuffed compositions invite a comparison with the baroque still-lifes that inspired them, to their disadvantage; the smaller pictures speak more coherently, and little ironies creep in. In ''Spanish Melon,'' the cut fruit echoes the voluptuous backside of Velázquez's ''Rokeby Venus''; a convex image of the artist at work is reflected in a blue glass pitcher, another Velázquez touch. Through Oct. 28. (Tatistcheff, 50 W. 57th St. 664-0907.)

Short List—**DONALD BAECHLER,** Baron/Boisanté, 50 W. 57th St. 581-9191. Through Oct. 24. . . . **RALPH ALBERT BLAKELOCK,** Salander-O'Reilly, 20 E. 79th St. 879-6606. Through Oct. 31. . . . **GIUSEPPE GALLO,** Associated American Artists, 20 W. 57th St. 399-5510. Through Oct. 31. . . . **SIMON LEE,** Sculpture Center, 167 E. 69th St. 879-3500. Through Oct. 17. . . . **HENRI MATISSE,** C & M, 45 E. 78th St. 861-0020. Through Dec. 12. . . . **KENNETH NOLAND,** Emmerich, 41 E. 57th St. 752-0124. Through Oct. 17. . . . **CAROL ROSS,** Gat, 1100 Madison Ave., at 82nd St. 327-0441. Through Nov. 21. . . . **ALICE SCHILLE,** Graham, 1014 Madison Ave., at 78th St. 535-5767. Through Oct. 24. . . . **PETER SULLIVAN,** Hirschl &

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Adler Modern, 21 E. 70th St. 535-8810. Through Oct. 31. . . . **JOHN WESLEY**, Danese, 41 E. 57th St. 223-2227. Through Oct. 17.

GALLERIES—CHELSEA

JONATHAN HAMMER—"The Famulus," a group of drawings and artists' books, all taking their themes and iconography from various branches of esoteric knowledge. The viewer patient enough to spend the time to make the connections will derive considerable pleasure; the large-scale drawings of a bedraggled puppetlike figure are immediately accessible in their forthright creepiness and despair. Through Oct. 24. (Marks, 523 W. 24th St. 243-0200.)

DAMIEN SMITH—Carefully rendered and consciously antiseptic drawings of modernist architecture, mostly interiors, all devoid of people. There is a frisson of the surreal, as in one room appointed with oddly self-sufficient-looking typewriters. The implied message: something bad is going to happen. Through Oct. 17. (Morris, 465 W. 23rd St. 727-2752.)

SHORT LIST—**MIGUEL CALDERÓN**, Rosen, 525 W. 24th St. 627-6000. Through Oct. 17. . . . **ERIK A. FRANDSEN**, DCA Gallery, 525 W. 22nd St. 255-5511. Through Oct. 17. . . . **SARAH LUCAS**, Gladstone, 515 W. 24th St. 206-9300. Through Oct. 17. . . . **MILTOS MANETAS**, Postmasters, 459 W. 19th St. 727-3323. Through Nov. 7. . . . **LAURIE SIMMONS**, Metro Pictures, 519 W. 24th St. 206-7100. Through Oct. 24.

GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

MIKE BIDLO—"The Fountain Drawings": hundreds of them, in various sizes and styles, all homages to Marcel Duchamp's notorious urinal readymade. Some of the drawings are delicately rendered, while others seem casually tossed off. The Duchampian icon has been presented in a range of signature art-historical styles: AbEx, Bourgeois (Louise), biomorphic. The collection looks impressive, but one does wonder what the point is. Through Oct. 24. (Shafrazi, 119 Wooster St. 274-9300.)

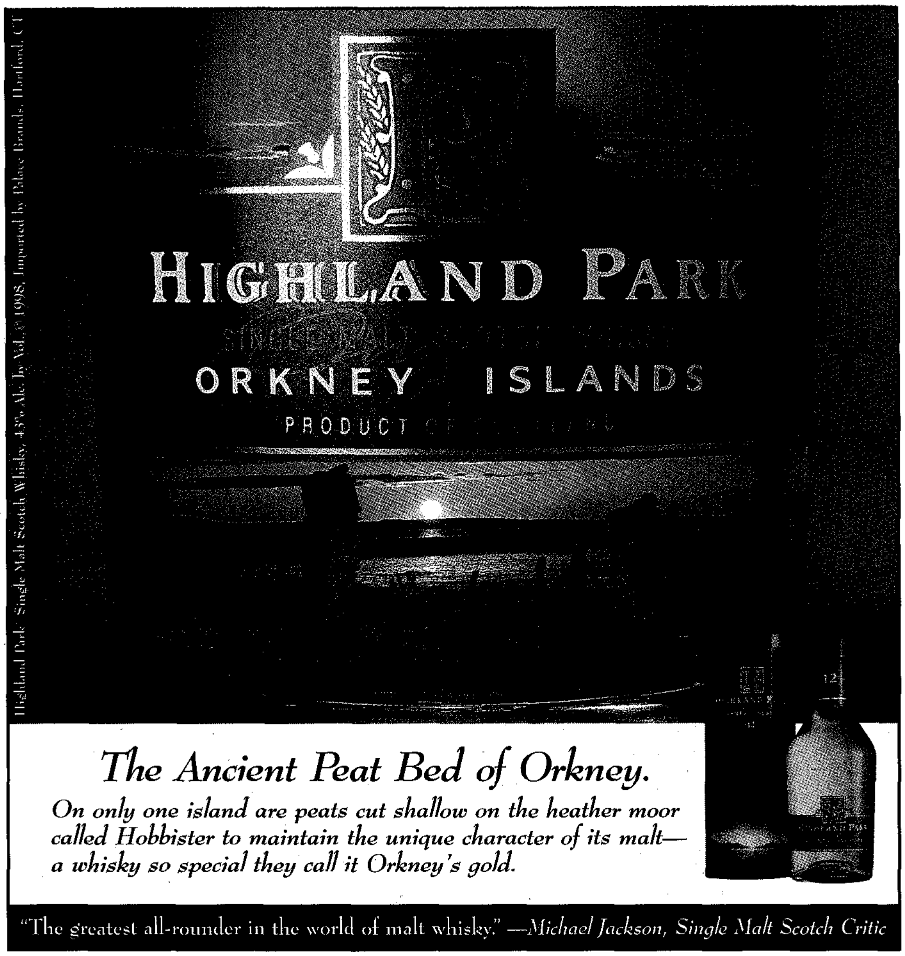
KATY SCHIMERT—Wall drawings, smaller works on paper, a film, and installations make up this artist's annoying mise en scène, which in some oblique fashion concerns the rise and fall—or something like that—of a young Wall Street trader. The apparent subject matter is timely, given the recent highs and lows of the market, but Schimert fails to make enough connections between her mediums to render the theme compelling. Through Oct. 17. (Zwirner, 43 Greene St. 966-9074.)

SHORT LIST—**LAURIE ANDERSON**, Artists Space, 38 Greene St. 226-3970. Through Nov. 7. . . . **SILVIA BÄCHLI**, A/D, 560 Broadway. 966-5154. Through Nov. 7. . . . **PAUL DAVIS**, School of Visual Arts, 209 E. 23rd St. 592-2144. Through Oct. 30. . . . **DONNA DENNIS** and **THOMAS LANIGAN-SCHMIDT**, Holly Solomon, 172 Mercer St. 941-5777. Both shows through Nov. 7. . . . **MINNIE EVANS**, Ross, 568 Broadway. 343-2161. Through Nov. 14. . . . **CAIO FONSECA**, Senior, 375 West Broadway. 941-0960. Through Nov. 7. . . . **JANNIS KOUNELLIS**, Ace, 275 Hudson St. 255-5599. Through Nov. 28. . . . **JOSEPH MARIONI**, Blum, 99 Wooster St. 343-0441. Through Dec. 5. . . . **VIRGIL MARTI**, Thread Waxing Space, 476 Broadway. 966-9520. Through Oct. 24. . . . **JEFFREY VALLANCE**, Lehmann Maupin, 39 Greene St. 965-0753. Through Oct. 31.

AUCTIONS AND ANTIQUES

SOTHEBY'S—Oct. 14: Old Master paintings. . . . ¶ Oct. 19-20: Jewelry from the estate of Betsey Cushing Whitney (the late Mrs. John Hay Whitney); the collection's centerpiece, estimated to go for between five and seven million dollars, is a pair of Cartier ear clips decorated with diamonds of white and "vivid blue" (the first time a diamond so designated by the Gemological Institute of America has been offered at auction). (York Ave. at 72nd St. 606-7000.)

CHRISTIE'S—Oct. 15: Old Master paintings. . . . ¶ Oct. 16: Important English furniture and decorative pieces. . . . ¶ Oct. 20: Silver, ob-



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jects of virtu, and Russian art. (Park Ave. at 59th St. 546-1000.) . . . At **CHRISTIE'S EAST:** Oct. 14: Rare books and maps. . . . ¶ Oct. 19: European decorative art. . . . ¶ Oct. 20: Antique and period jewelry. (219 E. 67th St. 606-0400.)

SWANN—Historic documents, letters, and other paper memorabilia, including many items from the archives of former Secretary of Labor, Supreme Court Justice, and United Nations Ambassador Arthur J. Goldberg. (104 E. 25th St. 254-4710. Oct. 15.)

DOYLE—Oct. 14: Asian art. . . . ¶ Oct. 20: A wide-ranging sale of antique toys, dolls, lead soldiers, music boxes, and tchotchkes. (175 E. 87th St. 427-2730.)

INTERNATIONAL FINE ART AND ANTIQUE DEALERS SHOW—In addition to the booths of the seventy-eight dealers at this fall classic, visitors should check out a loan exhibit featuring tiaras created since 1800. (7th Regiment Armory, Park Ave. at 66th St. Oct. 16-22, with a benefit preview on Oct. 15. For information, call 642-8572.)

NEW YORK ARTS OF PACIFIC ASIA SHOW—A gathering of international dealers whose wares are selected to spotlight not only classic Asian art but also pieces that reflect cultural interaction with the West. (69th Regiment Armory, Lexington Ave. at 25th St. Oct. 17-19, with a benefit preview on Oct. 16. For information, call 310-455-2886 or, while the show is in progress, 212-683-2434.)

NEW YORK PHOTOGRAPHY FAIR—Forty-three dealers offer works by modern masters and contemporary artists. (Puck Building, Lafayette and Houston Sts. Oct. 16-18, with a benefit preview on Oct. 15. For information, call 777-5218.)

PHOTOGRAPHY

JEFF BROUWS—Lucid color landscapes of the motels, coffee shops, gas stations, and tractor trailers that populate America's interstates and lesser highways. Through Oct. 17. (Mann, 42 E. 76th St. 570-1223.)

JULIUS SHULMAN—Wonderfully crisp modernist interiors and exteriors, in black-and-white and color, by this octogenarian chronicler of the Southern California architecture of Richard Neutra, Charles Eames, Raphael Soriano, Frank Lloyd Wright, and others. Through Nov. 14. (Richardson, 560 Broadway. 343-1255.)

"THE AMERICAN CENTURY: OBSERVATIONS AND METAPHORS"—Part two of this gallery's exploration of the power of the image covers the years 1936 to 1967 and includes work by many artists, among them André Kertész, Dorothea Lange, Edward Weston, and Robert Frank. Through Oct. 17. (Danziger, 851 Madison Ave., at 70th St. 734-5300.)

INTERNATIONAL CENTER OF PHOTOGRAPHY—"Walker Evans, Simple Secrets," a show of works from the collection of Marian and Benjamin A. Hill. . . . ¶ "Intimate City: The Photographs of Thomas Roma." Both shows through Nov. 29. (1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St. 860-1777. Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Fridays, 10 to 8; and Saturdays and Sundays, 10 to 6.)

INTERNATIONAL CENTER OF PHOTOGRAPHY MIDTOWN—"Seeing Is Believing," a survey of the work of Vik Muniz. Through Nov. 8. (Sixth Ave. at 43rd St. 860-1777. Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Fridays, 10 to 8; and Saturdays and Sundays, 10 to 6.)

SHORT LIST—**SALLY AFFELBAUM** and **NICHOLAS BARKER**, Saul, 560 Broadway. 431-0747. Both shows through Oct. 17. . . . **HARRY CALLAHAN** and **ROBERT RAUSCHENBERG**, Pace Wildenstein MacGill, 32 E. 57th St. 759-7999. Both shows through Oct. 24. . . . **LARRY CLARK**, Luhring Augustine, 531 W. 24th St. 206-9100. Through Oct. 24. . . . **NAN GOLDIN**, Marks, 522 W. 22nd St. 243-0200. Closed Saturdays; through Nov. 28. . . . **DONALD LOKUTA**, Morthland, 225 Tenth Ave., at 23rd St. 242-7767. Open Sundays, noon to 5; through Oct. 17. . . . **JAN LUKAS**, De Lellis, 47 E. 68th St. 327-1482. Through Nov. 7. . . . **KATHRYN MARX**, Witkin, 415 West Broadway. 925-5510. Through Nov. 7. . . .

BOOK CURRENTS

Tales of the Tapes

MULTITASKING—that is, raking leaves and doing t'ai chi at the same time, or cooking while stringing beads—is an American mania, and the publishing world is exploiting it to the fullest. Last year, commuters, joggers, knitters, and home cooks spent nearly two billion dollars improving their downtime by simultaneously listening to audio books.

Until a few years ago, most audio books were condensed mysteries and thrillers, Tony Robbins-style self-helps, or relationship tips from gurus like John Gray. Lately, however, the public has cultivated a taste for unabridged fiction and nonfiction, and publishers are scrambling to meet the demand, with such classics as **TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD** (Audio Editions), artfully read in eight cassettes by actress Roses Prichard, and **THE GRAPES OF WRATH** (Penguin), whose twelve tapes come packaged in Depression-era photographs. The Prince of Wales has put his crest on Cover to Cover, an imprint whose narrators often have Royal Shakespeare Company pedigrees; this fall, you can revel in seventeen hours of **GREAT EXPECTATIONS**, read by the British actor Martin Jarvis. For those who despair of ever really reading Pepys, Kenneth Branagh provides nine hours of excerpts from his **DIARY** (HighBridge Classics).

Some books are so effective on tape that they're arguably better heard than read. Audio Editions' version of Graham Greene's **THE THIRD MAN**, read by Jarvis, begins with the haunting zither music of the film, and Jarvis's cynical, assured voice brings Harry Lime to seedy life—and death. Jeremy Irons gives a sinister, sensual reading to **LOLITA** that, at twelve hours, does not last long enough. The tour de force is a twenty-four-hour marathon performance of Isaac Bashevis Singer's **SHADOWS ON THE HUDSON** (DoveAudio), narrated by Theodore Bikel and others in embracing Old World accents. As he tells of the Polish immigrant Boris Makaver looking out on his Upper West Side courtyard, Bikel muses, "Whenever Boris gazed into the courtyard and listened to its silence, the bustle of America evaporated." Listening to the wise sounds of these tapes produces the same effect.

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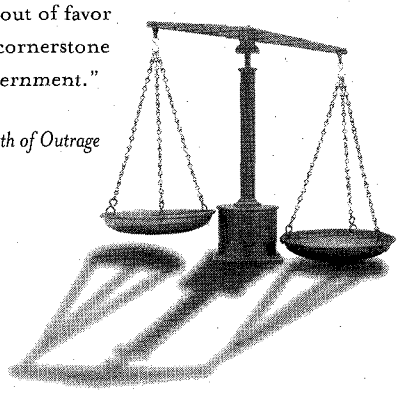

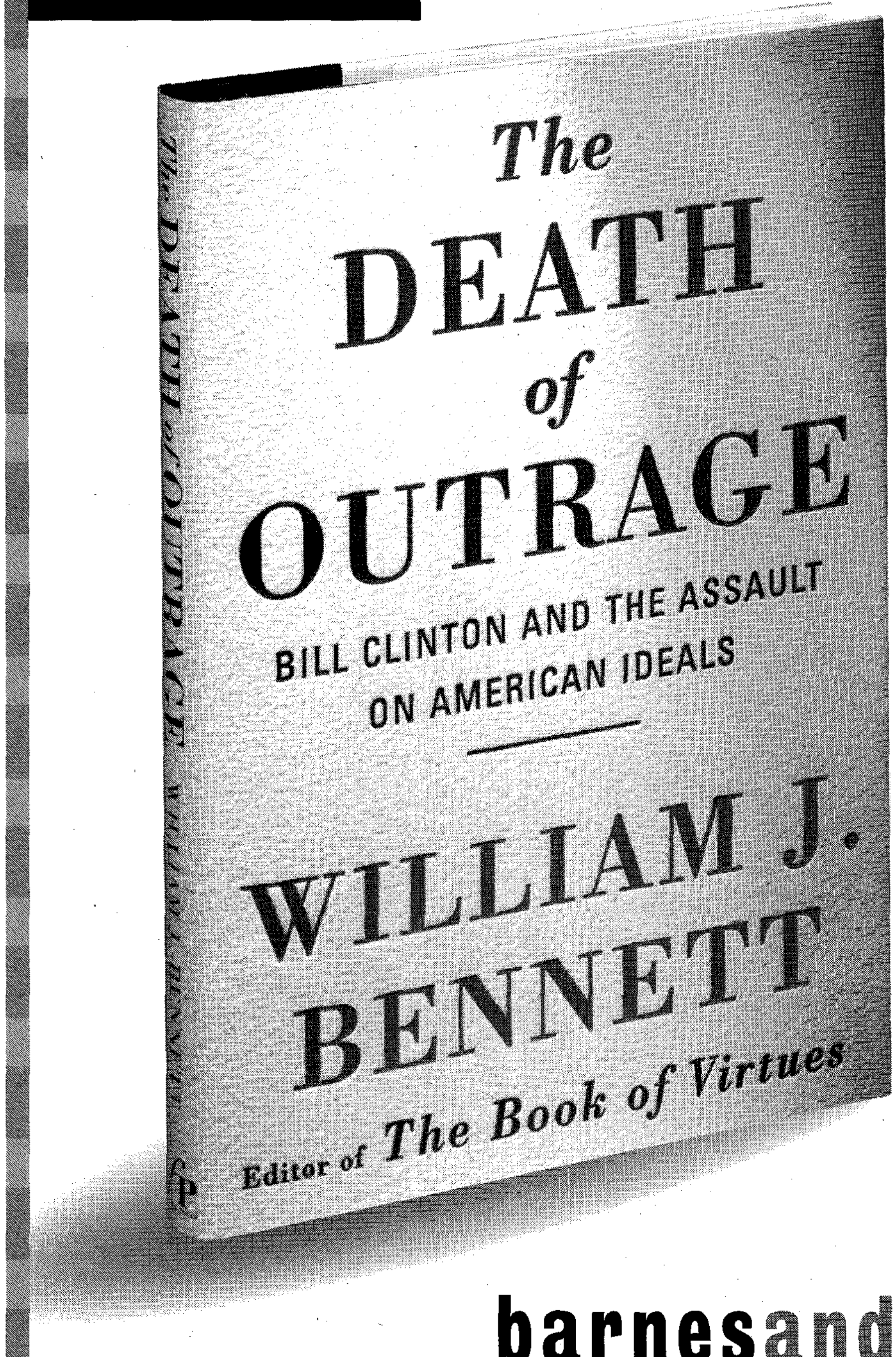
The DEATH of OUTRAGE
BILL CLINTON AND THE ASSAULT ON AMERICAN IDEALS
WILLIAM J. BENNETT
Editor of The Book of Virtues
The DEATH of OUTRAGE
WILLIAM J. BENNETT
FP

THE DEATH OF OUTRAGE

by William J. Bennett

Presidential character does matter. That is the incisive argument put forth in former cabinet secretary and bestselling author William J. Bennett's new book, *The Death of Outrage: Bill Clinton and the Assault on American Ideals.* Seeing this as a case that must be confronted head on, he methodically unravels the arguments made in Clinton's defense. For Bennett, the urgency is clear: The lack of a substantial public condemnation of the scandals endangers America's fundamental system of values. (Free Press)

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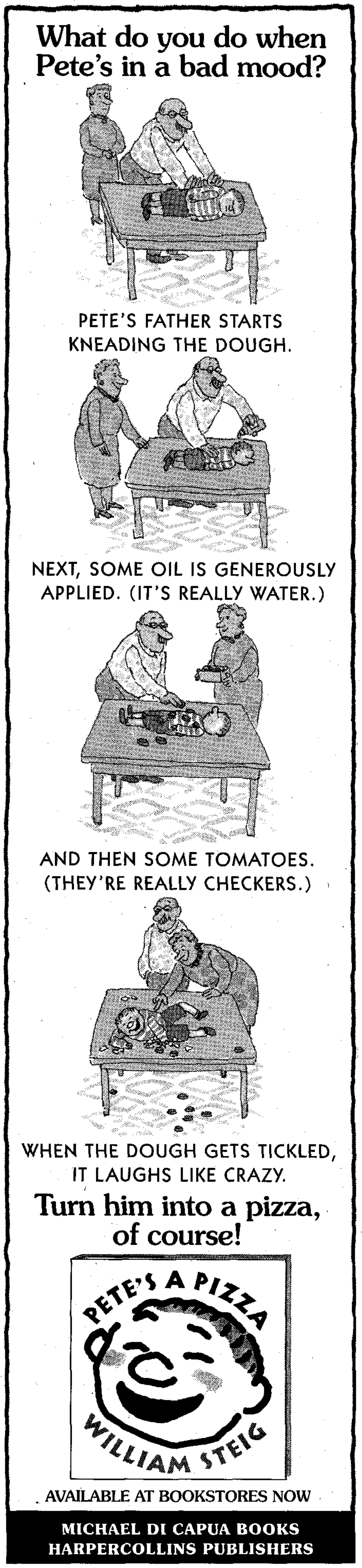
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(See the museum listings for photography exhibitions at the Metropolitan Museum and the Brooklyn Museum.)

CLASSICAL MUSIC

(The box-office number for Alice Tully Hall is 875-5050; for Carnegie Hall and Weill Recital Hall, 247-7800; and for Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St., 854-7799.)

OPERA

METROPOLITAN OPERA—**LOHENGRIN,** with Karita Mattila, Deborah Polaski, Ben Heppner, Falk Struckmann, and René Pape; conducted by James Levine. (Oct. 14 and Oct. 17 at 7.) . . . **TOSCA,** with Aprile Millo, Richard Leech, and Alain Fondary; Nello Santi. (Oct. 15 at 7:30.) . . . **SAMSON ET DALILA,** with Denyce Graves, Plácido Domingo, and Frederick Burchinal; James Levine. (Oct. 16 at 8.) . . . With Mark Baker instead of Mr. Domingo. (Oct. 19 at 7:30.) . . . **CARMEN,** with Hei-Kyung Hong, Béatrice Uria-Monzon, Franco Farina, and Gino Quilico; David Robertson. (Oct. 17 at 12:30 and Oct. 20 at 7:30.) (Metropolitan Opera House. 362-6000.)

NEW YORK CITY OPERA—Oct. 14 at 7:30: "Tosca." . . . ¶ Oct. 15 at 7:30: "Il Barbiere di Siviglia." . . . ¶ Oct. 16 at 8: "Orfeo ed Euridice." . . . ¶ Oct. 17 at 1:30 and 8, and Oct. 18 at 1:30: A new production of "Hansel and Gretel," sung in English, with the action transposed to turn-of-the-century New York. (New York State Theatre. 870-5570.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

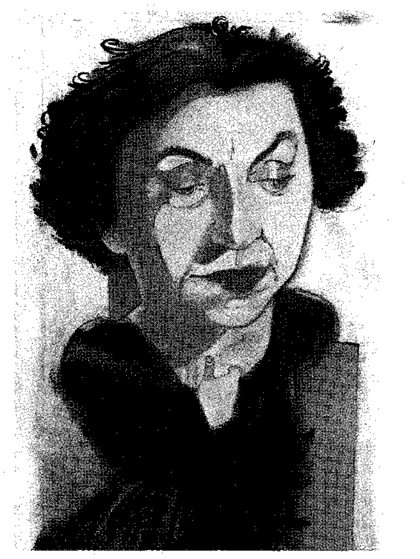
NEW YORK VIRTUOSI CHAMBER SYMPHONY—Kenneth Klein conducts music from the Roaring Twenties: Stravinsky's "Ragtime," Hindemith's Kammermusik No. 3, Louis Gruenberg's "The Daniel Jazz," John Alden Carpenter's "Krazy Kat," and Milhaud's "Le Boeuf sur le Toit." (Kaye Playhouse, Hunter College, Park Ave. at 68th St. 772-4448. Oct. 14 at 8.)

NEW YORK POPS—Skitch Henderson leads popular favorites, with actress Christine Baranski. (Carnegie Hall. Oct. 16 at 8.)

VIENNA CHOIR BOYS—The lads may come across as too cute for some tastes, but few musical organizations boast so ancient or distinguished a heritage. Established in 1498 to sing in the imperial chapel of the Hapsburg emperor Maximilian I, they have played a central role in Vienna's musical culture. In this concert, the sixth stop on their quincentennial tour of North America, they are joined by the Chorus Viennensis (former choirboys who are now tenors, baritones, and basses) and the Vienna Chamber Orchestra to perform Mozart's "Coronation" Mass (K. 317), following works by six composers who were closely linked to their history: Heinrich Isaac (the group's first music director), Franz Joseph Haydn (who, as a member of another Vienna choir, sang in joint concerts with the group), Antonio Salieri (their music director for nearly forty years in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries), Franz Schubert (a member for five years), and Anton Bruckner (their organ accompanist for a spell). Directed by Agnes Grossman, who in 1996 was named the ensemble's first-ever female music director. (Carnegie Hall. Oct. 19 at 8.)

"FROM DARKNESS TO LIGHT: A JUBILEE FOR ISRAEL"—A benefit concert with mezzo-soprano Olga Borodina, violinist Sarah Chang, and the American Symphony Orchestra among the performers. (Avery Fisher Hall. Oct. 19 at 8. For information, call 697-4188.)

"SACRED MUSIC IN A SACRED SPACE"—Kent Tritle directs the series' orchestra in Saint-Saëns's Symphony No. 3 (with organist Nancianne Parrella) and Bruckner's "Te Deum" (with the Choir of St. Ignatius Loyola and soloists). (Church of St. Ignatius Loyola, Park Ave. at 84th St. 288-2520. Oct. 20 at 7:30. . . . **NOTE:** A pre-concert recital by Ulrich Meldau, organist of the Zurich Symphony Orchestra, open to ticket holders, begins at 6:30.)



EWA PODLEŚ: *The "Musical America International Directory of the Performing Arts," which includes essentially everyone who claims to be a professional musician, lists a thousand and ten sopranos, four hundred and fifty-six mezzo-sopranos, and twenty-four contraltos. Rare indeed are these deep-toned songbirds, and the Polish singer Ewa Podleś may be the rarest of them all, with her velvety, organlike tones taking on the brilliance of a trumpet as she rises through her three-octave range. Fluid coloratura has earned her renown as a bel-canto singer, but she's also a compelling recitalist. New Yorkers can hear her in both specialties this month, singing Polish and Russian songs at Alice Tully Hall (on Oct. 18) and Rossini arias with the Moscow Chamber Orchestra at Carnegie Hall (on Oct. 25)—musical experiences that promise both interpretative and vocal depth.*

RON LEACH

ST. THOMAS CHOIR OF MEN AND BOYS—Gerre Hancock directs the choir and the Orchestra of St. Luke's in works by two Haydns: the Requiem in C Minor, by Michael Haydn, and the C-Major Organ Concerto (with organist Judith Hancock) and "Nelson" Mass, by his older brother, Franz Joseph. (St. Thomas Church, Fifth Ave. at 53rd St. 664-9360. Oct. 20 at 7:30.)

PHILADELPHIA ORCHESTRA—Andreas Delfs conducts an all-Brahms program comprising two works for chorus with orchestra—"Nänie" and "Schicksalslied," both with the Philadelphia Singers Chorale—and the Piano Concerto No. 1, with Maurizio Pollini. (Carnegie Hall. Oct. 20 at 8.)

RECITALS

Hexagon—The piano-and-winds sextet performs quintets for piano and winds by Beethoven and Carter, as well as Carter's Eight Études and a Fantasy for Wind Quintet. (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 501-3330. Oct. 14 at 8.)

Four Nations Ensemble—Presenting cantatas and instrumental chamber music by Handel, Caldara, and Vivaldi. (Friends Meeting House, 15 Rutherford Pl., between Second and Third Aves. Oct. 14 at 8. For information about tickets, call 718-622-3695.)

Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center—Founded in 1969 as the nation's first "repertory company" for chamber music, the society's structure has been much imitated: a loosely knit group comprising enough members to cover both standard chamber groupings and oddball instrumental combinations. The opening concerts of the organization's thirtieth season demonstrate the breadth of its repertoire. Oct. 14 at 8: An opening-night benefit concert that presents short pieces or single movements by twelve composers (from Bach to Shostakovich) who helped define the mainstream of chamber music. . . . ¶ Oct. 18 at 5 and Oct. 20 at 7:30: Schumann's Piano Quartet, plus Mahler's symphonic song cycle "Das Lied von der Erde"—the latter as it was arranged, for thirteen instruments and two vocal soloists, by Schoenberg for his Society for Private Musical Performances, which, unfortunately, went out of business before the transcription was finished. As a result, Schoenberg left his project incomplete, and it was brought into performing shape only in 1983, by the musicologist Reiner Riehn. David Golub conducts this performance, which features mezzo-soprano Lorraine Hunt and tenor Anthony Dean Griffey. (Alice Tully Hall.)

"Hindenburg"—A music-and-video documentary by Steve Reich and Beryl Korot, on a program with Mr. Reich's nearly hour-long "Music for Eighteen Musicians." (Brooklyn Academy of Music, 30 Lafayette Ave. 718-636-4100. Oct. 15-17 at 7:30.)

Bargemusic—Cellist Maureen McDermott and pianist Pedja Muzijevic perform Debussy's Cello Sonata; violinist Geoff Nuttall and Mr. Muzijevic offer Franck's Violin Sonata; and all three join for Brahms's B-Major Piano Trio. (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 718-624-4061. Oct. 15 at 7:30 and Oct. 18 at 4.)

Mischa Maisky and Martha Argerich—The cellist and the pianist perform sonatas by Beethoven (in G Minor) and Prokofiev, as well as Schumann's "Fünf Stücke im Volkston" and "Adagio and Allegro." (Carnegie Hall. Oct. 15 at 8.)

Stella Doufexis—The mezzo-soprano, assisted by pianist Graham Johnson, performs a surprisingly short program—not even an hour's worth of music—comprising Schumann's "Liederkreis" (Op. 39) and songs by Poulenc (including his "Banalités"). (Weill Recital Hall. Oct. 16 at 8.)

New York's Ensemble for Early Music—Frederick Renz leads secular works from the seventeenth century, by Monteverdi, Schein, Purcell, and others. (Cathedral of St. John the Divine, Amsterdam Ave. at 112th St. Oct. 16-17 at 8 and Oct. 18 at 3. For information about tickets, call 749-6600.)

Andrew Bolotowsky—An entire day of unaccompanied flute music may not be everybody's cup of tea, but even mildly interested listeners should not feel bad about sneaking in and out in the course of this flutist's seven-hour performance of solo pieces from the eighteenth century to the present. (Anita Shapolsky gallery, 152 E. 65th St., patio entrance. Oct. 17, from 11 A.M. to 6. No tickets necessary.)

John Williams—The guitarist performs works by Vivaldi, Albéniz, Mikis Theodorakis, and others. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100. Oct. 17 at 8.)

Guarneri Quartet—The foursome plays quartets by Mozart (in G Major, K. 387), Barber, and Dvořák (in F Major, Op. 96). (Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 570-3949. Oct. 17 at 8. . . . **Note:** In a pre-concert conversation, beginning at 7 and open to ticket holders, the group's members chat with painter Jack Levine about music.)

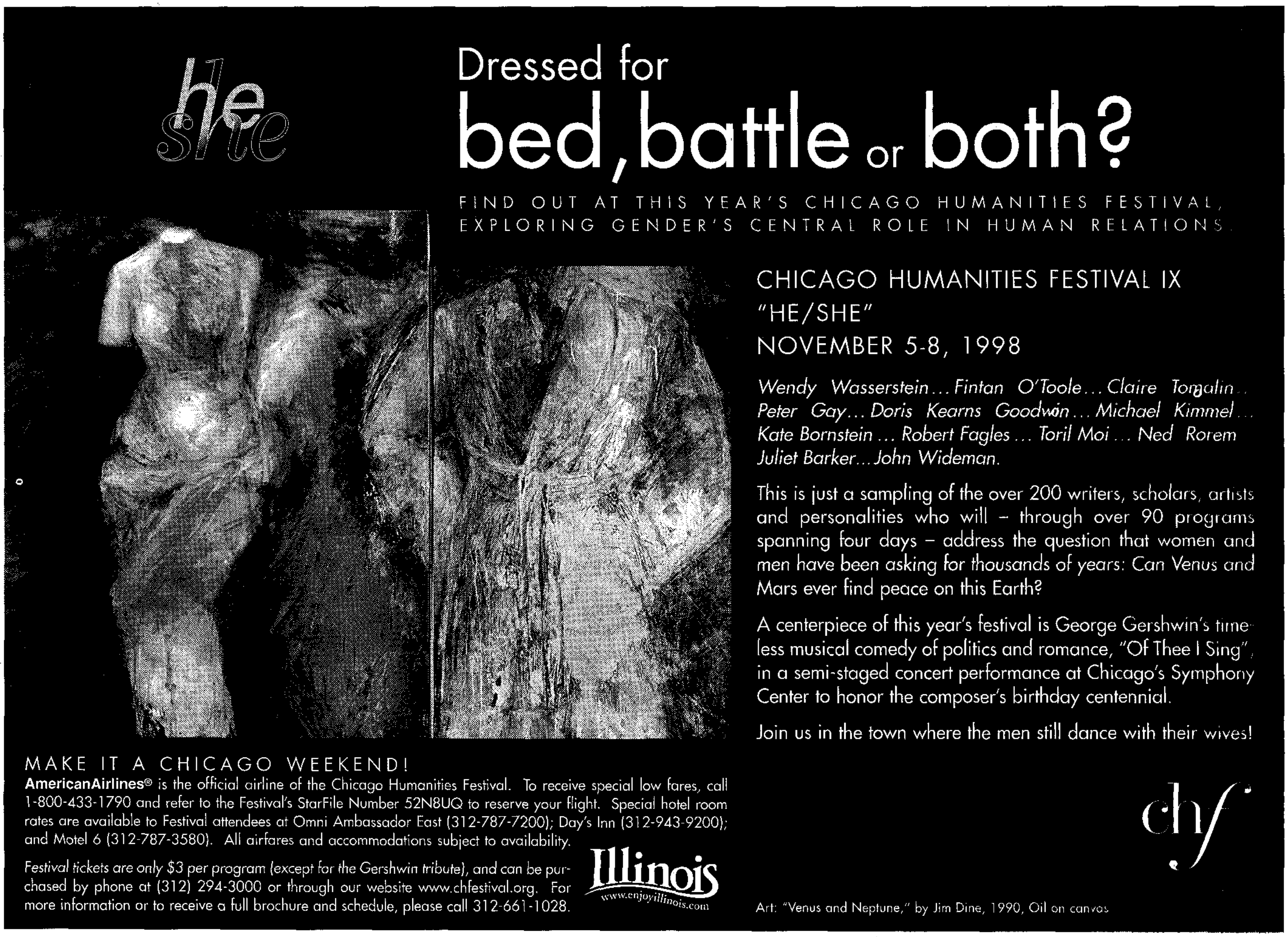
League of Composers/ISCM—Presenting works by Ursula Mamlok and her teacher, Roger Sessions (his String Quartet No. 2 and Six Pieces for Solo Cello). (Miller Theatre. Oct. 17 at 8.)

Ewa Podleś—The contralto performs songs by Polish and Russian composers: Chopin, Mieczlaw Karlowicz, Lutoslawski, Mussorgsky ("Songs and Dances of Death"), and Rachmaninoff. Pianist Jerzy Marchwinski assists. (Alice Tully Hall. Oct. 18 at 2.)

Scott Hendricks—Baritone, in songs by Vaughan Williams, Corigliano, and others. (Kosciuszko Foundation, 15 E. 65th St. 734-2130. Oct. 18 at 3.)

Fitzwilliam String Quartet—Founded by four Cambridge undergraduates in 1969, this English foursome achieved note as one of the first ensembles outside Russia to champion the music of Shostakovich; they gave the Western premières of his last three quartets and became the first ensemble anywhere to record the complete cycle of fifteen. In 1996, the ensemble reorganized, with some turnover of personnel, but its members' commitment to Shostakovich remains central. In this concert, they play his Quartet No. 3, in addition to works by Purcell, Boccherini, Haydn, Glazunov, and Schnittke. (Frick Collection, 1 E. 70th St. 288-0700. Oct. 18 at 5.)

Frigg—The German avant-garde septet offers what it describes as "a pastiche of musical and verbal textures" by its founder, Bert Wrede, based on or involving texts by Ber-



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Art: "Venus and Neptune," by Jim Dine, 1990, Oil on canvas

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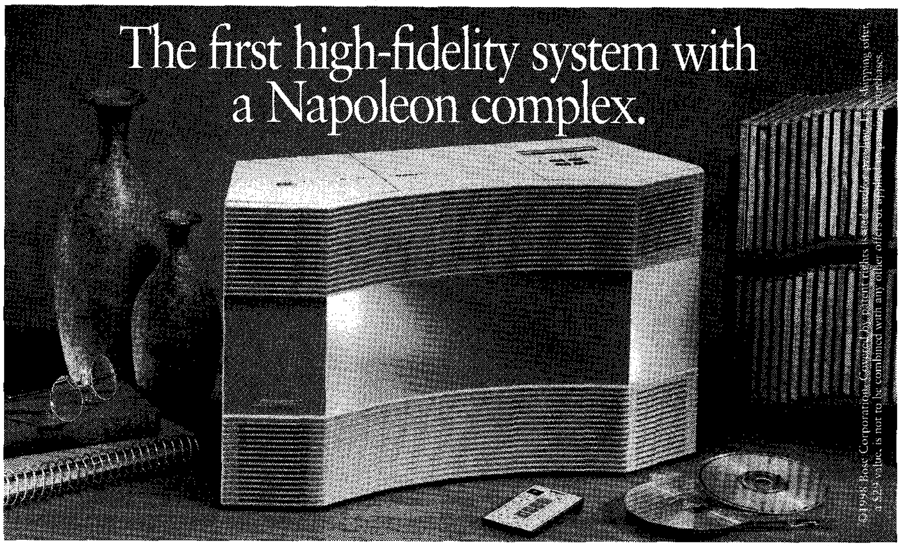

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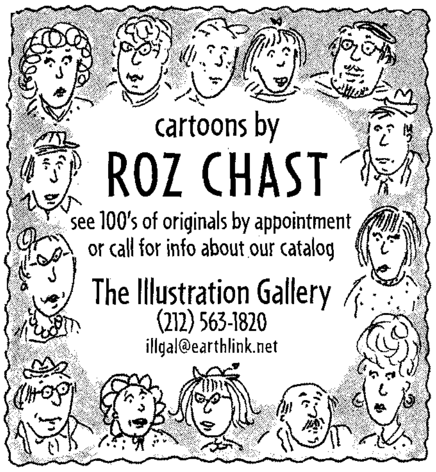

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tolt Brecht and the musical style of the Weimar Republic cabarets. (Miller Theatre. Oct. 19 at 8.)

Trio Wanderer—The ensemble, comprising three laureates of the Paris Conservatoire's *premier prix*, offers piano trios by Ravel, Rorem (his "Spring Music"), and Copland ("Vitebsk"). (Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. 355-6160. Oct. 19 at 8.)

Bruce Brubaker—The pianist teams up with theatrical director Ian Belton to present (as Mr. Brubaker ambitiously describes it) "a concert of solo piano music that aims to redefine the recital." In practical terms, this signals the use of atmospheric lighting, prearranged extra-musical sound (as opposed to the coughing and shuffling that occur during most concerts), and large video monitors that will enable members of the audience to approach the event as if they were television viewers rather than actual attendees (a dubious improvement). The program comprises works by Glass, Cage, and Adams. (Miller Theatre. Oct. 20 at 8.)

John Scott—The organist, who since 1990 has served as director of music at St. Paul's Cathedral in London, performs works by Buxtehude, Bach, Franck, Messiaen, and others. (Church of the Holy Trinity, 316 E. 88th St. 289-4100. Oct. 20 at 8.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND

"Madison Scare Garden"—With New York City crime rates at historic lows, walking down darkened side streets around Madison Square Garden no longer inspires fear. To be really frightened, you'll have to go inside, where a forty-thousand-square-foot space features such interactive attractions as a haunted disco called Studio Fifty-Gore, a dilapidated hotel of sin called Nightmare on Times Square, and the Gotham Sewer Tunnels, no explanation necessary. This Halloween you won't have to fear for your life; your wallet, however, is another story. (Madison Square Garden. 465-6741. Oct. 16-Nov. 1.)

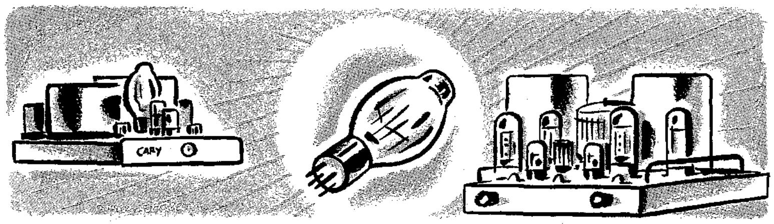
Readings—Oct. 15 at 6: By poet Marilyn Hacker. (Stella Adler Conservatory, 419 Lafayette St. 260-0525.) . . . ¶ Oct. 16 at 7: By Susan Minot, from her novel "Evening," and Jonathan Ames, from his novel "The Extra Man." (The Drawing Center, 35 Wooster St. Tickets at the door.) . . . ¶ Oct. 18 at 2: By *New Yorker* poetry editor Alice Quinn, from the poems of Emily Dickinson. (Wave Hill, 249th St. at Independence Ave., the Bronx. For reservations, which are required, call 718-549-3200, ext. 213.) . . . ¶ Oct. 19 at 6:30: By Dale Peck, from his novel "Now It's Time to Say Goodbye"; Jim Lewis, from his novel "Why the Tree Loves the Axe"; Robin Troy, from her novel "Floating"; and Ellen Miller, from her novel "Like Being Killed." (Astor Lounge, 316 Bowery, at Bleecker St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ Oct. 19 at 8: By critic Susan Sontag, writer Joan Didion, editor Jason Epstein, and many others, from the contributions they've made to *The New York Review of Books* over the past thirty-five years. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100.)

Talks—Oct. 14 at 6:30: Harold Evans, author of "The American Century," moderates a discussion about the history of the republic since 1889, with William F. Buckley, Jr., Mario Cuomo, Robert Hughes, and Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. (Newseum/NY, 580 Madison Ave., at 57th St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ Oct. 15 at 7:30: Hans Holzer, the founder of the Center for Paranormal Studies, gives an illustrated lecture that aims to prove that there is life after death. (Housing Works Used Book Café, 126 Crosby St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ Oct. 19 at 6:30: Attorney Leon Friedman moderates a discussion about privacy, free expression, and writing, with Judy Collins, David Leavitt, Cynthia Ozick, and Janna Malamud Smith. (Ethical Culture Society, 2 W. 64th St. No tickets necessary.)

ON AND OFF THE AVENUE

Semper Fi

THESE are the Dark Ages of hi-fi. Only a few lonely fanatics still huddle around their vinyl records and analog vacuum-tube amplifiers, preserving the old technology against the conquering digital barbarians. Even if you've thrown out your last LPs, hooking up your disk player to a tube amplifier can give those cold, savage CDs some real human warmth. Today's mass-produced stereo equipment is designed to be tossed when the next new gimmick comes along. Tube amplification, by contrast, promises durability and sonority—and a link to the legacy of that old-fashioned concept called "high fidelity."



DUPUY-BERBERIAN

Andy Singer, the white-bearded proprietor of **Sound by Singer** (18 E. 16th St.; 924-8600), has a conspiratorial glint in his eye which suggests a countercultural past. His shop is cluttered and comfortable, and he'll set you up with anything you need, at any budget. "I'll get as evangelical as I can until I see the eyes glaze over," Singer says about his analog pitch. What he really wants to turn you on to is the hard-line fundamentalist system: a single-ended, direct-heated triode, vacuum-tube amplifier. This technology hasn't changed much since the twenties, and, to purists, it's still considered the purest sound around.

While most high-end amplifiers are sleek, Spartan powerhouses (see the 1,200-watt Vacuum Tube Logic Wotan, at $27,500), Singer favors the Cary CAD-805C Monoblock, which looks like a science-fair project gone haywire. Most of this amp's electronics are right out in the open: it sports a set of wicked-looking black-box transformers behind a voluptuous 300B vacuum tube. (Known as "God's tubes," 300Bs were first used in thirties movie-house amplifiers and are favored in the stereo industry for their power and warmth.) There are no buttons on the front, just a gauge in the form of an uncanny green eye, staring at you. (It takes two of these units to create stereo sound; a pair goes for $9,000.) Singer can hook you up with the Audio Note Gaku-On, a $175,000 amplifier made of twenty-one pounds of microscopic silver wire (wound by hand) and tubes dating back to 1942. But he can also set you on the path to enlightenment with a Jolida 202a ($695), a sonorous starter set with a chrome-jukebox feel.

Blackie Pagano's got a lot of ink on him—from the word "lonesome" tattooed on his jugular to the image of the Virgin of Guadeloupe inside a shapely 300B tube that decorates his right triceps. Pagano is a craftsman—he loves tinkering with capacitors and resistors as much as he loves the "ripe" stereo sound he searches for. **Tubesville**, his silver-painted storefront, at 153 Ludlow Street (529-7345), is a rock-and-roll emergency room. The guts of guitar amps litter the floor; huge rolls of wire, boxes of dead tubes, and weird testing devices line the shelves; and cathode-ray oscilloscopes waver and quiver. Pagano can explain the subtle differences in obscure vintage tubes with the avuncularity of a good elementary-school science teacher. Doo-wop groups like the Five Satins can often be heard in the shop, since a-cappella music is a great test for his amps. "Our ears are so attuned to the bandwidth of the human voice," he says, "that distortions are immediately obvious."

Pagano builds high-end home stereos, priced from $2,500 to $12,000, to suit customers' ideas and specifications. He experiments with tubes even more esoteric than the 300B (which he finds hopelessly mainstream), and likens his design aesthetic to tricked-out hot rods with a military influence. His latest amplifier sits on the workbench: a burnished-steel chassis with chrome handles and bullet-shaped nuts is topped by an array of tubes and a power transformer that looks like a twenty-pound doughnut wrapped in wax paper.

For the novice, Pagano doesn't recommend entry-level analog items from specialty shops: "Find a Dynaco Stereo 70," from the early sixties, he says—they can be had at flea markets for under fifty dollars—"and then bring it to me to fix up."

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Fiction, $75,000

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Fiction, $75,000

Stuart Dybek
Fiction, $75,000

Lois-Ann Yamanaka
Fiction, $75,000

Chet Raymo
Nonfiction, $75,000

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Nonfiction, $75,000

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Nonfiction, $75,000

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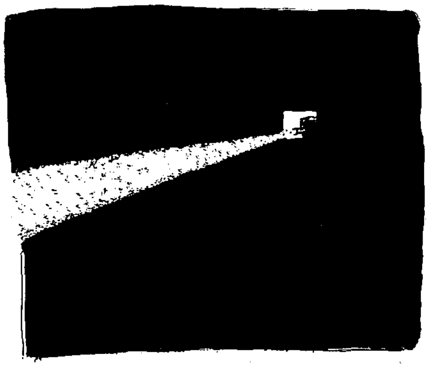


THE MOVIES

OPENING

The Alarmist—Door-to-door home-security salesmen (David Arquette and Stanley Tucci) are involved in break-ins and murder, in this black comedy written and directed by Evan Dunsky. Opening Oct. 16. (Village East Cinemas.)

All the Rage—A dark comedy about the Boston gay scene, written and directed by Roland Tec. Opening Oct. 16. (Quad Cinema.)

Beloved—A drama about an escaped slave haunted by the grown-up ghost of her dead child, based on Toni Morrison's novel. Directed by Jonathan Demme; with Oprah Winfrey, Danny Glover, and Thandie Newton. Opening Oct. 16.

Practical Magic—A romantic comedy about two sisters (Sandra Bullock and Nicole Kidman) who are white witches. Also with Dianne Wiest, Stockard Channing, Aidan Quinn, and Goran Visnjic. Based on Alice Hoffman's novel; directed by Griffin Dunne. Opening Oct. 16. (Lincoln Square, Murray Hill Cinemas, Orpheum VII, State, and Village Theatre VII.)

La Sentinelle—A psychological drama about death and politics, written and directed by Arnaud Desplechin. In French. Opening Oct. 16. (Quad Cinema.)

FILM NOTES

(If a movie has been reviewed recently in The Current Cinema, the date of its review is given.)

Antz—An animated film about a worker ant who becomes a hero warrior ant. Directed by Eric Darnell and Tim Johnson; with the voices of Woody Allen, Sharon Stone, Gene Hackman, and Sylvester Stallone. (Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema.) (Chelsea Cinemas, Lincoln Square, Orpheum VII, 64th and 2nd, State, and Village Theatre VII.)

Bad Manners—Deception, repression, jealousy. Those are the themes—the nouns, if you will—of the screenplay by David Gilman, based on his play "Ghost in the Machine," originally produced at Chicago's Steppenwolf Theatre. Here are the adjectives that come to mind while watching the film: contentious, tendentious, pretentious. David Strathairn and Bonnie Bedelia play an unhappy older academic couple living in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Saul Rubinek and Caroleen Feeney play an unhappy younger academic couple who come to visit. Four academic types under one roof, drinking and acting out. Hmm.—*Ken Marks* (Quad Cinema.)

The Boat (1921)—Another brief Buster Keaton masterpiece (and the direct ancestor of "The Navigator"). It turns the maiden, and final, voyage of the hero's homemade family boat, the Damfino—pronounced, we discover, "Damned if I know"—into a comic catastrophe of titanic proportions. It's full of convulsive sight gags, like Buster trying to haul the vessel through his tiny cellar doors; hilarious examples of misguided ingenuity, like the ship's retractable masts and funnel; and moments of mysteriously effective surreal farce, like the tap in a bathtub turned lifeboat somehow issuing fresh water. Part of the film's charm comes from the relative calm of Buster, his on-screen wife (Sybil Seely), and their two little boys, who sport porkpie hats just like his.—*Michael Sragow* (Film Forum 2; Oct. 19.)

Clay Pigeons—In this dark Western, small-town life starts to pick up when a hayseed named Clay (Joaquin Phoenix) scores with his best friend's wife and finds a new fishing buddy in a serial killer (Vince Vaughn) who dresses like Howdy Doody. Clay figures out that his colorful acquaintance is responsible for stocking the lake with corpses, but by then it's too late. What follows is a Hitchcockian frame-up that makes Clay's head swim as he sits in jail trying to figure out how the kid with the ten-gallon hat put this over on him. Sorting out the sanguinary details is an F.B.I. agent (Janeane Garofalo) whose deadpan charm gives the movie's tortured plot a lift. The supporting cast of yokels commit plenty of redneck faux pas, but the witty script is weighed down by the director David Dobkin's heavy hand.—*Jay Fielden* (Chelsea Cinemas, Lincoln Square, New York Twin, State, and Village Theatre VII.)

Don't Look Now (1973)—A Daphne du Maurier story of the occult, presented in fast, splintered, almost subliminal imagery. Julie Christie and Donald Sutherland team up wonderfully as parents whose drowned daughter may or may not be sending them messages. The meanings are on a simple Hitchcock level, but the unnerving cold ominousness of the environment (mostly Venice, deserted at the end of the season) says that things are not what they seem. Life is treated as a puzzle, and the clues are in references that go by in split seconds. This was the fanciest, most carefully assembled enigma put on the screen to date. Nicolas Roeg is a chillingly chic director; the picture is an example of high-fashion gothic sensibility. Venice, the labyrinthine city of pleasure, with its crumbling, leering gargoyles, is obscurely, frighteningly sensual here. Using du Maurier as a base, Roeg comes closer to getting Borges on the screen than those who have tried it directly, but there's a distasteful clamminess about the picture. Roeg's style is in love with disintegration.—*Pauline Kael* (Film Forum 2; starting Oct. 16.)

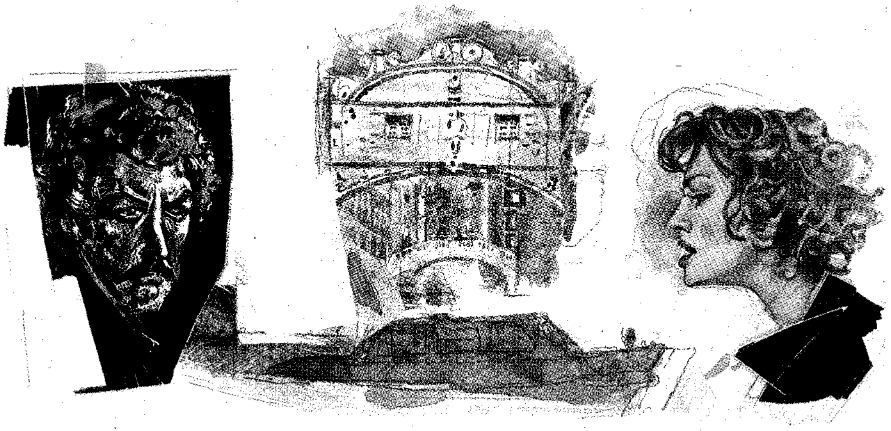
Female Trouble (1974)—Bad taste takes a back seat to sheer perversity as Dawn Davenport (Divine, in the role of her career) goes from juvenile delinquent and unwed mother to ecstatic candidate for the electric chair. "I'm a thief and a shitkicker, and, uh, *I'd* like to be famous," she tells Donald and Donna Dasher (David Lochary and Mary Vivian Pearce), proprietors of the Lipstick Beauty Salon, who make Dawn the model for their "Crime Is Beauty" campaign. Edith Massey, clad in leather, plays mean Aunt Ida, and Mink Stole is Dawn's bratty daughter, Taffy. Divine also plays Taffy's father, Earl, a feat that entailed some wicked cross-cutting at the moment of conception. Everyone overacts atrociously, which is exactly what the writer-director, John Waters, had in mind. Waters wrote many other roles for Divine, but none as hilarious and hair-raising as this.—*Mary Norris* (American Museum of the Moving Image; Oct. 18.)

Happiness—Todd Solondz's ultra-black comedy about three sisters (Jane Adams, Lara Flynn Boyle, and Cynthia Stevenson) in New Jersey. (Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema.) (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

The Impostors—A gross miscalculation from writer-director Stanley Tucci. The movie's very first joke bombs (it's time to retire the ten-spoonfuls-of-sugar-in-the-coffee-cup gag), and so do those that follow. Tucci and Oliver Platt play a couple of struggling actors in nineteen-thirties New York who get caught up in a wacky shipboard adventure. Tucci imports a number of comic styles—silent film, Marx Brothers, farce, even "Godot"-like absurdism—and fails to make any of them work. He loves his impressive roster of actors—including Alfred Molina, Campbell Scott, Lili Taylor, and an uncredited Woody Allen—but loves too well and not wisely: many of the scenes appear to be the result of undisciplined improvisation, and nobody comes out looking good.—*K.M.* (Angelika Film Center, Cinema II, Lincoln Square, and 19th Street East 6.)

The Inheritors—An Austrian film, set in the nineteen-thirties, that with humor and not too much heavy-handedness explores the notion of justice from various angles. When their misanthropic landlord is murdered, some meek peasants inherit the earth—at least the patch of it they'd previously toiled on for his profit. Their initial stupefaction soon turns into a taste for the complex flavors of freedom, as they squabble and then unite against the malevolent schemes of neighboring landowners to take their farm away. The murder plot and the winningly played characters keep the focus on the foreground, and the untalky script belies the fact that this is director Stefan Ruzowitzky's second feature. In German.—*Jeff Gustavson* (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Lolita—The irony in Adrian Lyne's version of the Nabokov novel is that the picture is tender and even rather tame—so respectful toward the pathos of the original, and so wary of Nabokov's more brazen comic endeavors, that many viewers, far from being outraged, will be surprised by the air of art-house politesse. If you like Jeremy Irons, you will enjoy his panicky yet mournful embodiment of Humbert Humbert; if you don't like him, you'll probably enjoy it even more, and get a kick from his sneaky, self-deluding misdeeds. All movie adaptations of Nabokov fall short, by definition, but this one is the most graceful failure so far.—*Anthony Lane* (2/23-3/2/98) (Angelika Film Center, Cinema I, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)



Donald Sutherland and Julie Christie in "Don't Look Now."

WARREN LINN

Love Is the Devil—A short but suitably warped account of the love affair between the painter Francis Bacon (Derek Jacobi) and a small-time criminal named George Dyer (Daniel Craig), who was to model for some of Bacon's most convulsive works. The action, for what it's worth, starts in 1963 and ends in 1971, but the director, John Maybury (a disciple of Derek Jarman), is only fitfully tempted by the demands of plot. He prefers to function in impressionistic bursts; we get a series of flickering, semi-linked scenes in which Bacon gambles, brushes his teeth with bleach, drinks with his appalling cronies, braces himself for masochistic sex, and even occasionally begins to paint—although, since the film was forbidden to show any authentic Bacons, he never gets very far. What rescues the enterprise from indulgence is first the audacity of Jacobi's performance, with its blend of caution and abandonment, and then Maybury's honorable attempt not so much to mimic the blurting violence of Bacon's imagery as to suggest the ways in which it was triggered by ordinary life. If only someone had given as much thought to the script.—*A.L.* (Film Forum.)

Monument Ave.—Director Ted Demme and screenwriter Mike Armstrong have come up with a skillful, hard-hitting gangster tale involving Irish hoodlums in Boston's blue-collar neighborhood of Charlestown. Denis Leary plays a heavy-drinking small-time thief, and the crew of actors he's surrounded by (Colm Meaney, Ian Hart, Billy Crudup, and Famke Janssen, among others) never strike a false note—their working-class desperation is entirely believable. But it's Leary who's the real surprise here; his sincere, tough-guy performance is mesmerizing. He lifts the film above its familiar, claustrophobic environment into the gritty realism of very good urban drama.—*Bruce Diones* (Angelika Film Center.)

Pecker—In this John Waters parable, Baltimore is a city where everyone is straightforward and true, and where all eccentricities are embraced, creating a funny, freakish utopia. Observing it all from the inside is amateur photographer Pecker (Edward Furlong), whose pictures get noticed by a New York art dealer (Lili Taylor), but the merest whiff of big-city commercialism and irony is enough to threaten the well-being of Pecker's community. Waters gets uniformly bright performances from the large cast—especially Christina Ricci as Pecker's girlfriend and Mary Kay Place as his mother—and he succeeds in composing yet another twisted love letter to his home town.—*K.M.* (Angelika Film Center, First & 62nd Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, and Regency.)

Polyester (1981)—Get out your Odorama cards, kids. John Waters says it's time to scratch and sniff! In Waters's first film to approach the mainstream, Divine is Francine Fishpaw, sniffing around her suburban Baltimore home for evidence against her lousy two-timing porn-king husband (David Samson), who is getting it on with his secretary (Mink Stole). Daughter Lulu (Mary Garlington) aspires to be a go-go girl; son Dexter (Ken King) is an out-of-control foot fetishist. In a brilliant instance of the casting of has-beens, Hollywood's own Tab Hunter plays Divine's knight in shining armor. As Cuddles, Francine's only friend in the world, Edith Massey, in her last film role, provides extra-comic relief with her inimitable line readings ("Purr Francine! Purr, purr Francine!"). Divorce and alcoholism are tame subjects for Waters, but his treatment is bracing, with or without the scent track.—*M.N.* (American Museum of the Moving Image; Oct. 17.)

Ronin—A tense return to form, and to France, by director John Frankenheimer. Decades after "The Train" and "French Connection II," he takes us to Paris and the Riviera, and to the murky mission that's been assigned to a bunch of freelance spies; these are played by Robert De Niro, Jean Reno, Stellan Skarsgård, Sean Bean, and Skipp Sudduth, while

IT SLEEPS ALONE

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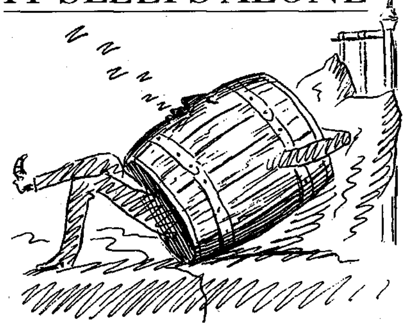


the object of the assignment is played with grace and wit by a large suitcase. All they have to do, under the guidance of a young Irishwoman (Natascha McElhone), is steal the case; the movie derives its peculiar flavor from the combination of that simple task and the furtive, fateful complications that cluster around it. In the manner of director Jean-Pierre Melville, whom he knew and admired, Frankenheimer likes to launch his action sequences from patches of sombre suspense; the men sit around in hotel rooms, then go out for a car chase. After a while, you stop counting the chases—they just get longer and louder, and it's like watching the revival of a forgotten art form; the fact that it's done with a minimum of special effects makes it all the more stirring. With Jonathan Pryce as an Irish danger man and Michael Lonsdale as a hairy sage.—*A.L.* (Chelsea Cinemas, Coronet Cinemas, Criterion Center, 84th Street Sixplex, Metro Cinema, Orpheum VII, 34th Street Showplace, and Village Theatre VII.)

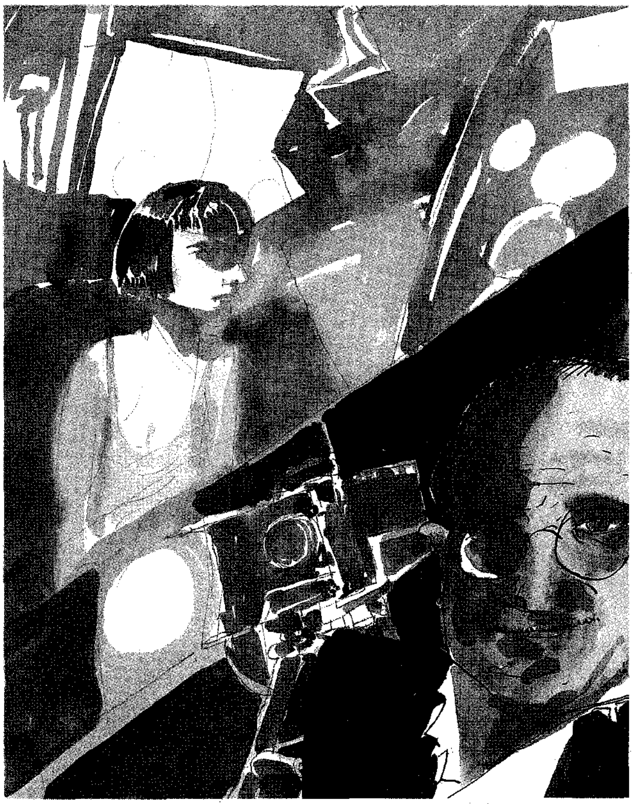
Rush Hour—Jackie Chan returns to American films in this mediocre action comedy, which co-stars helium-voiced comedian Chris Tucker. They play detectives on the trail of Asian kidnappers, and Chan, thankfully, has been given some room to orchestrate a few fine physical gags; otherwise the direction, by Brett Ratner, is clueless.—*B.D.* (Astor Plaza, Chelsea West, 84th Street Sixplex, Metro Cinema, Murray Hill Cinemas, Orpheum VII, Sutton, and Village East Cinemas.)

A Soldier's Daughter Never Cries—A Merchant-Ivory adaptation of Kaylie Jones's autobiographical novel of growing up as the daughter of the novelist James Jones in Paris and Long Island in the nineteen-seventies. The story is told through the eyes of the narrator as a child, and later, after she's become a transatlantic teen-ager (precociously acted by the fourteen-year-old Leelee Sobieski). What makes the movie memorable is the over-all excellence of the performers; the adults—Barbara Hershey, who plays a loving alcoholic mother, and Kris Kristofferson, whose wizened machismo hits the war novelist square in the eye—don't outshine the kids.—*J.F.* (Paris.)

There's Something About Mary—The Farrelly Brothers, who have tipped the outrageousness scale before ("Dumb and Dumber," "Kingpin"), come up with some great new gross-out gags in this romantic comedy. The star, Cameron Diaz, in her Olivia Newton-John haircut, is the perfect naïve foil—she looks like she never knows what hit her. As the two loopy guys who are in love with her, Matt Dillon and Ben Stiller are garishly charming and full of desperate and irreverent ploys to get the girl. The film is packed with tasteless jokes (the best of them are crudely sexual), and it has a refreshing mean-spiritedness.—*B.D.* (Chelsea Cinemas, Criterion Center, East 85th Street, First & 62nd Cinemas, Lincoln Square, Orpheum VII, and Village East Cinemas.)

Touch of Evil—At first glance, little has changed in this restored version of Orson Welles's ornate thriller; the titles (and Henry Mancini's brassy theme) have disappeared from the celebrated opening shot, but from then on the basic thrust of this Mexican border tale (filmed in Venice, California) remains intact. We still have the manly Vargas (Charlton Heston) struggling to solve the case of the car bomb while his wife (Janet Leigh) feels the heat from a gang of local hoods; we are still thrown by the freakish cameos by Zsa Zsa Gabor and Mercedes McCambridge, and the horrific slaying—a kind of jazz strangulation—of the fleshly Grandi (Akim Tamiroff); and, of course, we still see Welles himself as police chief Hank Quinlan, looming over the action like a Falstaff gone to seed. If anything, the cuts and repairs make the work more fluid and less flamboyant; it was sometimes the studio, rather than Welles himself, which liked to go over the top. His scenes with brothel-keeper Marlene Dietrich have nothing to do with the plot and everything to do with the rotting heart of this amazing fable: the apotheosis of pulp.—*A.L.* (9/21/98) (Film Forum.)

Your Friends & Neighbors—Another dirty comedy of bad manners from director Neil LaBute. The contemptuous heroes of his last picture, "In the Company of Men," were venal enough, but, compared to the inhabitants of the new movie, they seem about as noxious as the Hardy Boys. This time we are introduced to two couples: Mary (Amy Brenneman) lives with Barry (Aaron Eckhart), while Terri (Catherine Keener) lives with Jerry (Ben Stiller). Jerry starts an affair with Mary (what does she see in him?), Terri falls for a gallery assistant called Cheri (Nastassja Kinski), and Barry, the only sensible one, continues to have sex with himself. It's hard to care about the damage these people do to each other, since most of it will strike the audience as richly deserved. Jason Patric plays Cary, a good-looking monster who has the nerve to suggest that, in a glum world, he's actually having fun.—*A.L.* (8/24-31/98) (First & 62nd Cinemas, Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, and 19th Street East 6.)



At MOMA, a series of films directed by G. W. Pabst.

ROBERT ANDREW PARKER

ALSO PLAYING

THE CELEBRATION: Lincoln Plaza Cinemas and Quad Cinema. . . . **HOLY MAN:** Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, Embassy 1, Murray Hill Cinemas, Orpheum VII, Sutton, and Village Theatre VII. . . . **THE MIGHTY:** Angelika Film Center, Chelsea Cinemas, Lincoln Square, and New York Twin. . . . **A NIGHT AT THE ROXBURY:** Art Greenwich Twin, 84th Street Sixplex, First & 62nd Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Olympia, and 34th Street Showplace. . . . **ONE TOUGH COP:** Chelsea Cinemas, Gotham Cinema, State, and Village East Cinemas. . . . **ONE TRUE THING** (9/28/98): Beekman, Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, State, 34th Street Showplace, and Waverly. . . . **PERMANENT MIDNIGHT** (9/28/98): Angelika Film Center, Eastside Playhouse, and Lincoln Square. . . . **ROUNDERS:** First & 62nd Cinemas, Lincoln Square, Murray Hill Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, and Village East Cinemas. . . . **SAVING PRIVATE RYAN** (8/3/98): Chelsea Cinemas, Guild, New York Twin, and Village Theatre VII. . . . **LA SÉPARATION:** Quad Cinema. . . . **SLAM:** Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas. . . . **URBAN LEGEND:** Chelsea Cinemas, Criterion Center, 84th Street Sixplex, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 64th and 2nd, and Village Theatre VII. . . . **WHAT DREAMS MAY COME:** Chelsea Cinemas, Lincoln Square, Murray Hill Cinemas, Olympia, Orpheum VII, 72nd Street East, Village Theatre VII, and Ziegfeld. . . . **WITHOUT LIMITS** (9/14/98): First & 62nd Street Cinemas, Lincoln Square, and Waverly.

REVIVALS, CLASSICS, ETC.

(Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.)

Film Forum 2 and 3, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110)—**THEATRE 2:** Through Oct. 15: "The Bicycle Thief" (1949, Vittorio De Sica; in Italian). . . . From Oct. 16 (except Oct. 19): "Don't Look Now" (†). . . . Oct. 19: "Steamboat Bill, Jr." (1928, Charles Riesner; silent), with Buster Keaton, and three Keaton shorts, "The Boat" (†), "My Wife's Relations' (1922; silent), and "Daydreams" (1922, silent). . . . **THEATRE 3:** "Touch of Evil" (†).

Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—Oct. 15 at 2:30: "Broken Blossoms" (1919, D. W. Griffith; silent). . . . ¶ A program of films by G. W. Pabst. Oct. 15 at 6: "Mademoiselle Docteur" (1936; in French, no English subtitles). . . . Oct. 16 at 2:30: "The White Hell of Pitz-Palü" (1929, a German silent film). . . . Oct. 16 at 6: "Kameradschaft" (1931, in French). . . . Oct. 16 at 8: "Westfront 1918" (1930). . . . Oct. 17 at 2: "Shanghai Drama" (1938; in French). . . . Oct. 17 at 5 and Oct. 19 at 2:30: "The Mistress of Atlantis" (1932). . . . Oct. 18 at 1: "The Threepenny Opera" (1931; in German), with Rudolf Forster. . . . Oct. 18 at 3:30: "The Threepenny Opera" (1931; in French, no English subtitles), with Albert Préjean. . . . Oct. 18 at 5:30 and Oct. 20 at 2:30: "Girls in Distress" (1939; in French, no English subtitles). . . . Oct. 19 at 6: "A Modern Hero" (1934). . . . ¶ Oct. 15 at 6:30 and Oct. 16 at 3: "Pop" (1998, Joel Meyerowitz). . . . ¶ Oct. 16 at 6 and 8, Oct. 17 at 2:30 and 5, and Oct. 18 at 1, 3, and 5: Six programs of films celebrating the thirtieth anniversary of Third World Newsreel. . . . ¶ Oct. 20 at 6: "Ugetsu" (1954, Kenji Mizogushi; in Japanese).

Walter Reade Theatre, Lincoln Center (875-5600)—A program of films by the Egyptian director Youssef Chahine; in Arabic, with English subtitles. Oct. 14-15 at 2: "Alexandria Again and Again" (1989). . . . Oct. 14 at 4: "An Egyptian Story" (1982). . . . Oct. 16 at 2, 4:30, 7, and 9:30; Oct. 17-18 at 4:30, 7, and 9:30; Oct. 19 at 2 and 4:30; and Oct. 20 at 2: "Destiny" (1997). . . . ¶ Oct. 17-18 at 2: "Pride of the Yankees" (1942, Sam Wood).

American Museum of the Moving Image, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria (718-784-0077)—A program of films directed by John Waters. Oct. 17 at 2: "Mondo Trasho" (1969). . . . Oct. 17 at 4:30: "Polyester" (†). . . . Oct. 18 at 2: "Multiple Maniacs" (1970). . . . Oct. 18 at 4: "Female Trouble" (†).

Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. (355-6160)—A retrospective (through Dec. 22) of films featuring Catherine Deneuve. Oct. 20 at 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, and 9: "Mississippi Mermaid" (1969, François Truffaut; in French).

Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. (864-5400)—A program of films made by United Artists. Oct. 20 at 7: "The Misfits" (1961, John Huston).... Oct. 20 at 9:15: "Last Tango in Paris" (1972, Bernardo Bertolucci; in French and English).

A Different Light Bookstore, 151 W. 19th St.—A Sunday-night series of free films (and popcorn). On Oct. 18 at 7, the feature will be "The Stepford Wives" (1975, Bryan Forbes).

Guggenheim Museum, Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (423-3587)—A program of French films, 1958-98; in French, with English subtitles. Oct. 17 at 2:30: "Passion" (1982, Jean-Luc Godard).... Oct. 17 at 7: "Lola" (1961, Jacques Demy).

Anthology Film Archives, 32 Second Ave., at 2nd St. (505-5110)—A program of films from Austria; in German, with English subtitles. Oct. 14 at 7 and Oct. 15 at 9: "Suzie Washington" (1997, Florian Flicker).... Oct. 14 at 9: "Year Number Ten" (1995, Käthe Kratz).... Oct. 15 at 7: Four short films.... Oct. 16 at 7 and 9: "The Year After Dayton" (1996, Nikolaus Geyrhalter).... Oct. 17 at 4: "A Loss Is to Be Expected" (1992, Ulrich Seidl).... Oct. 17 at 8: "Inheritance, or A Love Withheld" (1997, Andreas Gruber).... Oct. 18 at 4: "HannaH" (1996, Reinhard Schwabenitzky).... Oct. 18 at 8: "Charm's Incidents" (1995, Michael Kreihsl).... ¶ Oct. 14 at 8: "15 Months in May" (1997, Anja Murmann).... ¶ Oct. 17 at 6:30: "The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari" (1919, Robert Wiene; a German silent film).... ¶ Oct. 18 at 6: "Nanook of the North" (1922, Robert Flaherty; silent).

THEATRE ADDRESSES

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(For show times, call 777-FILM, except where noted.)

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St.
Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th St.
Astor Plaza, 44th St. at Broadway.
Beekman, Second Ave. at 66th St.
Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd St.
Chelsea West, 333 W. 23rd St.
Cinema I, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema II, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema 3rd Avenue, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Coronet Cinemas, Third Ave. at 59th St.
Criterion Center, Broadway at 44th St.
East 85th Street, First Ave. at 85th St.
Eastside Playhouse, Third Ave. at 55th St.
84th Street Sixplex, Broadway at 84th St.
86th Street East Twin, Third Ave. at 86th St.
Embassy 1, 2, and 3, Seventh Ave. at 47th St.
59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th St.
Film Forum, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110).
First & 62nd Cinemas, 400 E. 62nd St.
Gotham Cinema, Third Ave. at 58th St.
Guild, 33 W. 50th St.
Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, Broadway at 63rd St.
Lincoln Square, Broadway at 68th St.
Metro Cinema 1 and 2, Broadway at 99th St.
Murray Hill Cinemas, 160 E. 34th St.
New York Twin, Second Ave. at 67th St.
19th Street East 6, Broadway at 19th St.
Olympia I and II, Broadway at 107th St.
Orpheum VII, Third Ave. at 86th St.
Paris, 4 W. 58th St. (688-3800).
Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th St.
Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th St.
Regency, Broadway at 67th St.
The Screening Room, 54 Varick St. (334-2100).
62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd St.
64th and 2nd, Second Ave. at 64th St.
72nd Street East, Third Ave. at 71st St.
State, Broadway at 45th St.
Sutton 1 and 2, Third Ave. at 57th St.
34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th St.
Village East Cinemas, Second Ave. at 12th St.
Village Theatre VII, Third Ave. at 11th St.
Waverly 1 and 2, Sixth Ave. at 3rd St.
Worldwide Cinemas, 50th St. between Eighth and Ninth Aves.
Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th St.

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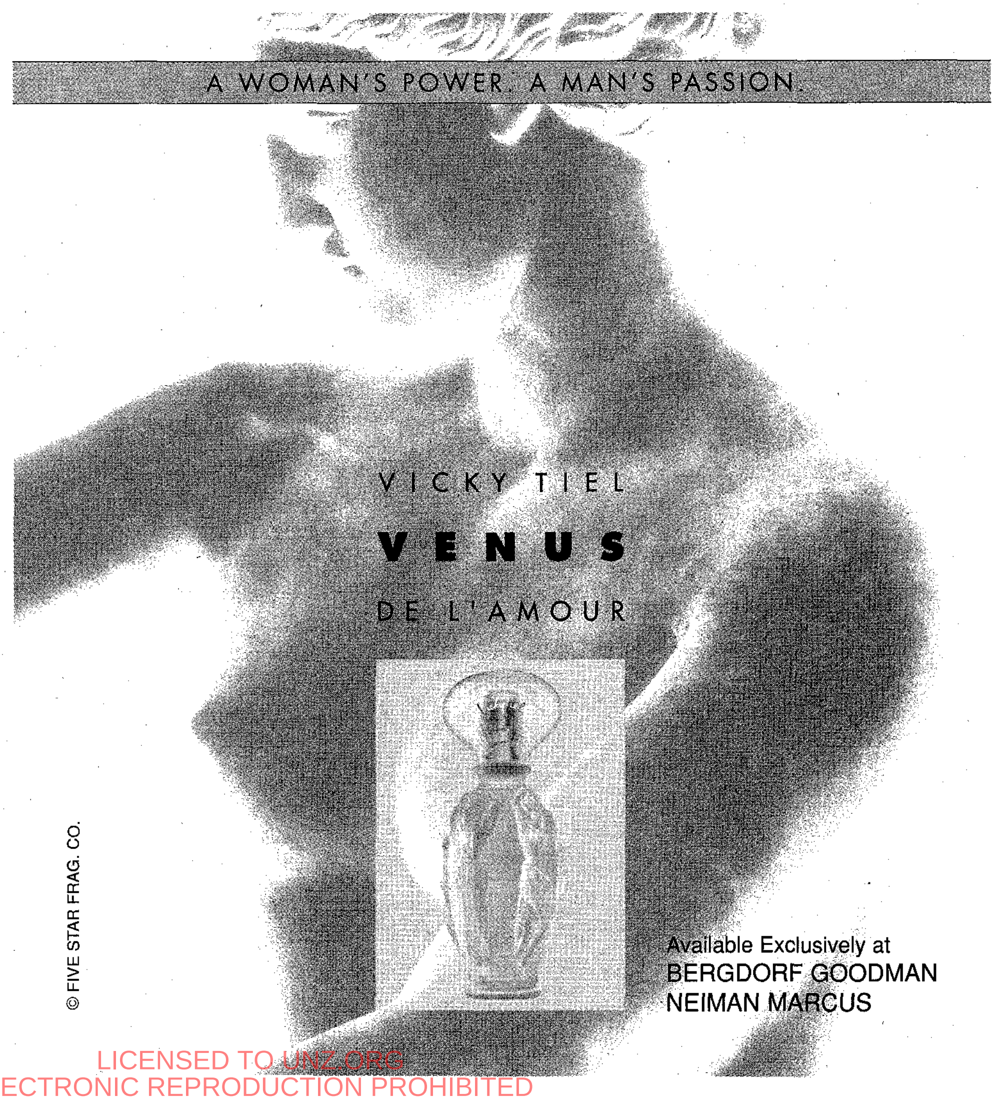

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THE NEW YORKER

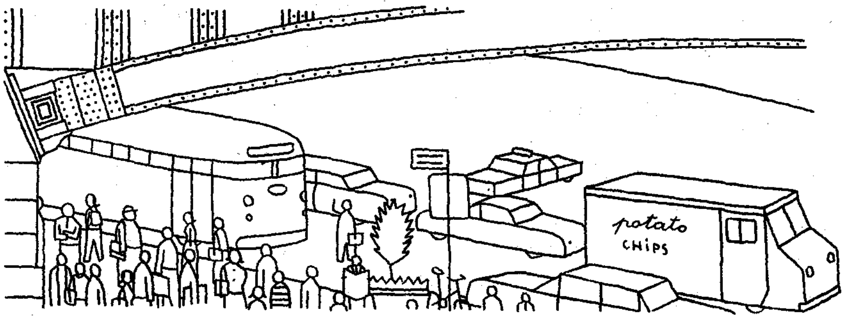
THE TALK OF THE TOWN

COMMENT

Buckle up. Here we go.

It sounds paradoxical, but last Thursday's vote by the House of Representatives to authorize a full-scale inquiry aimed at the impeachment of President Clinton is evidence that things are not working out quite as Kenneth Starr had planned. Mr. Starr—still known, for old times' sake, as the Whitewater Independent Counsel—wants Mr. Clinton removed from office, but in the report he submitted to Congress a month ago he did not specify his strategy to get the job done. A strategy, however, may be retrospectively inferred. The idea, one may reasonably speculate, was to ignite a firestorm calculated to force the President to resign in a matter of days, or a couple of weeks at most. That was the function of the salacious details. Once a series of shocking images had been seared into the collective mind's eye—the President receiving fellatio while discussing Bosnia with a congressman on the phone, the President enjoying a fragrant cigar, the President shuddering over the executive washbasin—the sequel would unfold, as some news magazine would be sure to write, "with stunning swiftness": public revulsion and indignation; collapse in the polls; demands for resignation from editorial boards, religious leaders, senior congressional Democrats, elder statesmen, maybe a Cabinet member or two; finally, at dusk on the South Lawn, the last, sad wave to weeping staffers from the doorway of Marine One.

In other words, the guy was supposed to be out of there by now. It hasn't worked out that way. The kindling caught fire—more than a hundred and forty newspapers called upon the President to resign—but the actual prairie has proved as flame-resistant as Junior's pajamas. No one really knows why. Perhaps the answer is that the American people, that great inert beast, deplores furtive, illicit sex and the lies that go with it but thinks such stuff ought to be kept in some sort of perspective. Or perhaps the beast consists in large part of individuals who have committed adultery, or can imagine committing adultery, or love someone who has committed adultery, or have done things in bedrooms, bathrooms, or even workplaces that they would not wish the entire world to see. Or perhaps it's that sex, unlike strategic arms or incomprehensible real-estate deals, is something that everybody, not just Sam and Cokie, is an expert on. Or perhaps the public simply enjoys frustrating the élites.



Whatever. Impeachment now moves ahead, despite the fact that most people are against it. Why? For the same reason that dream-on proposals for meaningful gun control and universal health care don't move ahead, despite the fact that most people are in favor of them: in Congress, minorities can call the shots, as long as the minority in question can work its will upon a majority of a majority. In the present case, the House Republican caucus, which represents about half the voting population (itself less than half the eligible citizenry), is in thrall to the adamantly conservative fraction of its political base, to which even moderate Republicans, if there are any, must hearken. The November elections will do nothing to weaken this dynamic.

A wild and crazy scenario now seems increasingly, and astonishingly, likely to play itself out over the next several months. After the elections, the House Judiciary Committee holds televised hearings. Monica Lewinsky, Linda Tripp, and Mr. Starr testify, providing little in the way of "new information" but a lot in the way of vivid moments to be savored by future generations of scandal buffs. Around the beginning of 1999, the House votes to impeach the President. A trial begins in the Senate, with the Chief Justice presiding. More testimony from Lewinsky et al. The President again declines to resign. (Where would he go? The Clintons don't even own a house to flee to.) The Senate votes, mostly on partisan lines, and the vote falls short of the two-thirds required for conviction. Meanwhile, all three branches of the government are paralyzed, the world looks on in contempt and alarm, and the long decline of public confidence in politics and politicians gets a powerful push. Still, it must all be about something terrifically important, because otherwise it wouldn't be happening, would it?—HENDRIK HERTZBERG

ILLUSTRATION BY LAURENT CILLUFFO

DEPT. OF COMEBACKS

A poetic public catharsis for the bogeywoman of the Boston Globe.

On a recent Saturday evening in Cambridge, Massachusetts, Patricia Smith made her first public comments since being fired from the *Boston Globe* last June for fabricating characters in her column. Instead of doing a prime-time interview with Barbara Walters (Smith turned her down, along with "60 Minutes" and the "Today" show), she chose to air her feelings on the tiny stage of Club Passim, the Harvard Square coffeehouse where, in the early sixties, Joan Baez and Bob Dylan appeared. Flanked by a saxophonist, a guitarist, and a blues singer, Smith performed a series of original poems about what her life has been like since her dismissal. When she took the stage, in a silky low-cut dress, she threw her head back and laughed. Then she launched into her poem cycle, "Professional Suicide."

Two weeks earlier, over drinks at a local bar, Smith had told me how, at the forty-third-birthday party she'd thrown for herself in late June, she'd slipped upstairs and put a gun into her mouth. As she talked, she pushed a snakebite around her plate with a fork. A snakebite is a shrimp that's been decapitated and shoved inside a jalapeño pepper, then dropped into boiling oil; Smith seemed to identify with the shrimp.

In the weeks after she was forced to give up her biweekly column, her husband moved out of the house; she was removed from the book tour for "Africans in America," the companion volume to an upcoming PBS documentary, to which she had contributed; and the American Society of Newspaper Editors took away her Distinguished Writing Award. The *Globe* columnist Eileen McNamara wrote in her June 27th column, "[Smith's] fall had nothing to do with her race; her rise had everything to do with it." Smith says that Matt Storin, the *Globe's* editor, E-mailed a well-meaning message to her that began with the phrase "Although you will never work in journalism again." (Storin does not recall those particular words, but he does remember E-mailing Smith to say that "maybe you can work for some hip magazine like 'Spin.' ")

"They wanted me to be destroyed," Smith said of some of her *Globe* colleagues. "I think I disappointed them." Pushing a couple of her short braids out of her eyes, she explained that, right after losing her job, she'd thought, I am not going to respond to them right now, but I am going to find a way to respond to them that settles this in my own heart. Hence "Professional Suicide," a work that bristles with anger, and in which the pronoun "they" can safely be understood to refer to Storin and other *Globe* staffers. One of the poems that Smith performed at Passim was called "Headlines They'd Like to See":

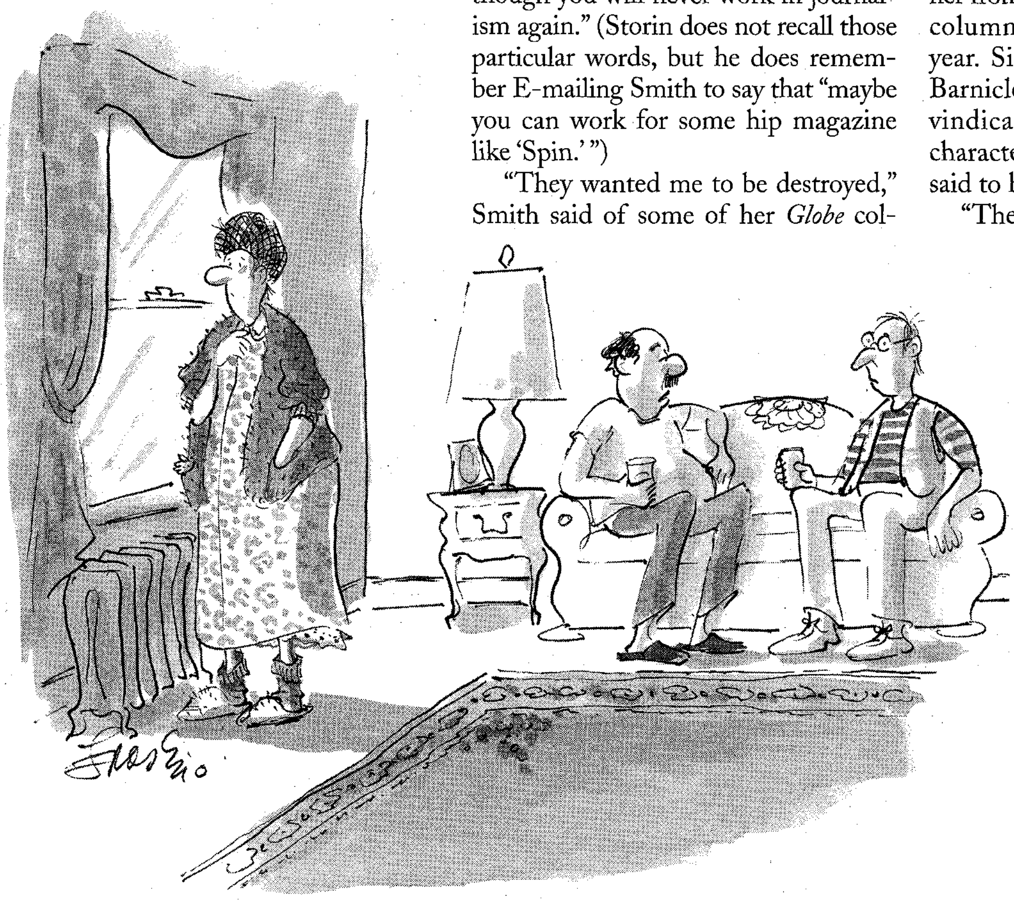
> Ousted disgraced columnist found rooting through dumpster in South End.
> Ousted disgraced columnist found *living* in dumpster in South End.
> Ousted disgraced columnist working at Estée Lauder counter with Janet Cooke.
> Ousted disgraced columnist working at Estée Lauder counter *for* Janet Cooke. . . .
> Ousted disgraced columnist says I had Bigfoot's baby.
> Bigfoot says: She made that up. I don't exist. . . .
> Ousted disgraced columnist accused of surviving.
> Reported survival a hoax.

Smith's bitter defiance distinguishes her from Mike Barnicle, the other *Globe* columnist who was discredited this year. Since his dismissal last August, Barnicle has embarked on a quest to vindicate himself by tracking down characters in his column whom he is said to have made up.

"There's supposed to be a thick red line drawn between the genres, and I never drew that. I don't think that's a sin," Smith told me. "I can understand that people who grew up thinking that newspapers were the be-all and end-all might feel that it was. But I also expect people to leave me the hell alone if I don't feel that way."

"Yes, I was a fool," reads a poem about the compulsion that drove Smith to write fiction in the newspaper. "I thought I had created the words. I thought I could bend their backs without asking."

Smith hopes to stage "Professional Suicide" at the Playwrights' Theatre, at Boston University, where

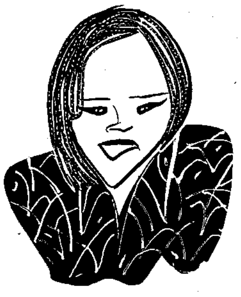


"She's inconsolable since Mizrahi went belly-up."

ILLUSTRATIONS BY TOM BACHTELL

she once performed a one-woman show that she had co-written with Derek Walcott. She shrugs off the critics who continue to refer to her as "unrepentant." She says, "If you can get through this show and not come away thinking that I've learned anything, that's your problem."

After the two-hour performance at Passim, a group of poets and artists gathered at Smith's Medford home. (She had invited the whole audience over after receiving a standing ovation.) Among the crowd was Gary Hicks, the rotund black poet, sitting at the kitchen table in front of a huge platter of chicken wings. Smiling broadly, he looked up and said, "After tonight, all the editors at the *Globe* should thank God that Patricia Smith is not a nuclear physicist."

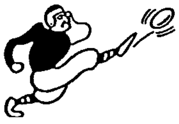

Patricia Smith

Smith seemed pleased with how the evening had gone. "It was a purging for me, and it was written partly for those people who have been concerned about my mental well-being," she said. "It was to let them know that I'm grounded, rooted, and O.K. Everybody's been asking for sound bites from me. Now I've got a way to answer those requests."

—Andrew Goldman

THE SPORTING SCENE

The Princeton Tigers try a new home on for size.



UNLIKE Yale and Harvard, which are trying to preserve their glorious but crumbling early-twentieth-century football stadiums, Princeton University razed Palmer Stadium, opened in 1914, after the 1996 season, and replaced it with a modern arena built on the same site. A couple of Saturdays ago, the new stadium opened, and, amid speeches and pageantry and an ode written for the occasion by the director of the university's creative-writing program, Paul Muldoon, a sold-out house watched the Tigers play Cornell.

The game began with two impressive Princeton drives, both ending in field goals by the excellent kicker, Alex Sierk. The Tigers looked uncharacteristically crisp and forceful, even formidable, in their new arena. Was it the team or was it the stadium? Palmer Stadium was built on a scale to match the mythic dimension that Ivy League football players used to command in the nation's sports culture—a stature created by Owen Johnson, the author of the 1912 novel "Stover at Yale," and by F. Scott Fitzgerald, among others. (The very last mark that Fitzgerald ever made on paper is a squiggly pencil line that shoots off the side of a page of the *Princeton Alumni Weekly*, where the author was underlining home football games when he was killed, by a massive heart attack, in 1940; that issue of the magazine is now with his papers in the university's library.)

While the Princeton football hero's stature has diminished in recent decades, the concrete embodiment of it remained, in the form of Palmer Stadium. The modern Princeton team had come to seem especially puny in so monumental a setting—the stadium could accommodate forty thousand but generally held far less than half that number. The scale of the new stadium, which holds twenty-eight thousand, seems better matched to the talent on the field. The architect, Rafael Viñoly, has succeeded in doing what the recruiters and coaches could not do: he has made the Princeton football team look good.

Many fans spoke warmly of the "intimacy" of the new place. One could never get a proper "wave" going in the old stadium—it would dwindle into ripples in the empty seats. At the Cornell game, a lusty wave went whipping around the crowd three times in a row. Though some alumni missed the roominess of the old place—those expanses in the horseshoe's curves where kids chased paper airplanes and alums could roam in search of old Tigers—many praised the four plazas between the stands and the stadium's outer wall which are among the outstanding features of the new design.

Other fan's notes: The new seats are raised, allowing more legroom, which is good for the knee joints but places more weight on the lower back; some Tigers from the nineteen-thirties could be seen to dodder even more than usual as they left the stadium clutching their sacroiliacs. The lines at the food concessions seemed long, perhaps because of the unusually large crowd, but at least you no longer have to worry about getting brained by falling concrete while waiting for a hot dog.

In the second half of the game, the quality of the football diminished, or perhaps the advantages provided by the new perspective had been only temporary. Once again, passes were dropped, which was just as well, since there were usually penalties on the plays anyway. Exasperated shouts of "Wake up out there!" were heard from the alums, just as they had been in Palmer. Still, the Tigers held on for a 6–0 victory, and the new era was under way.

The only discordant note on Opening Day was that no one knew what to call the new stadium. It has been provisionally named Princeton Stadium, in the hope that some donor, in exchange for immortality, will pony up twenty-five million of the forty-five million that the place cost to build. It was a muted reminder that money talks. If the place ends up being called Trump Stadium or Geffen Stadium, it will serve the university right.

—John Seabrook

THE CREATIVE LIFE

Monet had his water lilies, and Tom Christopher has Times Square.

A CRITICAL moment in Tom Christopher's artistic development occurred five years ago. He was sitting morosely in a sculpture park in Long Island City, from which a piece of his—an oversized bronze hammer embedded in four hundred pounds of concrete—had just been stolen. Teen-agers in backward baseball caps were loading cinder blocks into an old Pontiac Tempest, getting ready to sink the car in the East River. A station wagon towing a pushcart pulled up, and a man got out and dumped stale doughnuts on the ground. A pack of feral dogs descended on the doughnuts. Some people dressed in nice clothes stooped at the water's edge, cooked something on a small fire they'd built, and launched paper boats. "Everybody was completely oblivious of everybody else," Christopher says. "Suddenly I thought, This is just too good. This is the place for me."

Christopher looks like a tall, trim forty-six-year-old college sophomore. He wears plaid shirts, bluejeans, and black sneakers that are spattered with paint. His career has been so complicated that the David Findlay gallery—which is currently exhibiting several dozen of his paintings in a one-man show called "New York in Motion"—had to leave some of the best parts of his résumé out of its brochure. After art school, in California, he supported himself briefly by painting instant portraits of tourists at Disneyland. ("The hardest thing was people who had wispy mustaches but you couldn't tell if they were men or women. So I would save the mustaches for last and keep asking these leading questions.") He painted scenes of the kidnapping of Patty Hearst for *People*, and he worked as a courtroom artist during the murder trial of Jean Harris. ("The jurors went to church together one Sunday, and I had five minutes to paint them all. It was terrible. I had eyes in the middle of foreheads.") Christopher and his wife got fed up with New York a few years ago and moved to San Jose. But then he realized that all he really wanted to paint was Manhattan street scenes, so they moved back. On most days, he stands for hours on various street corners near Times Square and observes the tide of oddball humanity that washes relentlessly past.

"There's this undercurrent of criminals, transients, and nuts," he says happily. "It's like looking at a beach scene and thinking, Oh, this is beautiful. But if you know there was a shark attack the day before, it's even better."

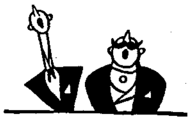
Christopher's pictures—which he executes in broad, fast, loopy strokes of boldly pigmented acrylic—are studies in light, shadow, motion, and human character. He is a realist with a strong sense of humor and a mildly hallucinogenic notion of perspective. Certain favorite themes recur: taxicabs, bicycle messengers, jumpsuited employees of the Sanitation Department. He is fond of his mistakes. Pointing to a streak of red paint that slants across the window of a taxicab in a picture called "Big Red Tour Bus on Broadway," he says, "This has no business being here. It fell from up there. But so what?"

Sometimes people who live in New York or are just visiting the city begin to wonder whether they really love New York after all. Christopher's paintings grab these people by the shoulders like a crazy sidewalk evangelist and force them to admit that they do. Arthur Sulzberger, Jr., bought one for the boardroom at the *Times*. Rudolph Giuliani liked one so much that Christopher gave it to the city, and it now hangs in City Hall. A maintenance worker in a hotel where Christopher had a show bought one on the installment plan, mailing a fifty-dollar money order every month. A few years ago, some Japanese businessmen decided that he had captured exactly what they love about the city, and they commissioned twenty-seven paintings of New York for a gallery in Osaka. They wanted one of Times Square, one of a basketball game, and one of some skateboarders. As for the twenty-four others, they said they just didn't care.

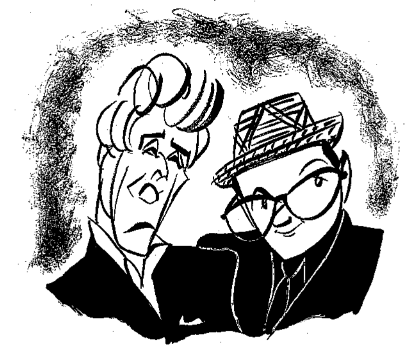
—David Owen

DEPT. OF GIVE AND TAKE

A master and a maverick make beautiful music together.



THE secret is out: Burt Bacharach and Elvis Costello have given birth to a love child. The baby's name is "Painted from Memory," and, although it is only two weeks old, it already seems to have qualities that you just don't see in most babies. Sure, all babies are cute, but this one is unusually engaging. The obvious question is: Who does the baby look like? Well, in some ways it resembles Burt, and it may remind you of a few of his older children by a previous marriage, such as "Walk On By" and "Anyone Who Had a Heart." But Elvis is in there, too. That pained quality? That intelligence? That exquisite sense of loss? That's Elvis. But mainly this baby looks like itself: familiar but completely new, not a simple sum of its parts but something indivisible and unique. You can see this golden child for yourself this week, when the proud parents present it in public for the first time, at Radio City Music Hall. Bacharach will play piano and conduct a twenty-four-piece orchestra, and Costello will sing. You don't have to bring a present, but you do have to buy a ticket. And it wouldn't kill you to dress up a little bit for a change.



Burt Bacharach and Elvis Costello

A couple of months before the due date, Bacharach and Costello were in New York to talk about their collaboration. Costello sat at a large table in the headquarters of Mercury Records, the OB-GYN, and Bacharach appeared to sit inside a video monitor on top of the table. Such is the miracle of videoconferencing: in reality, he was in Del Mar, California, in a rented beach house, with his wife, Jane, and their two-and-a-half-year-old daughter, Raleigh. A few years ago, Costello and Bacharach were asked to contribute a song to the Allison Anders movie "Grace of My Heart." They wrote the song "God Give Me Strength," a beautifully aching ballad, without ever being in the same room together: never have fax and answering machines been put to better use.

"It's always like a blind date," Bacharach said of collaborating. "The first time you go out, you don't know how it's going to be to sit in a room with them." Even after they'd written the song, he said, the real test of the partnership didn't come until they were in the recording studio. "It really felt good," he said. "We didn't have a hard moment in the whole process. We thought, Maybe we should do this again. Maybe we should go out on another date."

During the next two years, they got together for four- or five-day work sessions every few months. Both of them wanted to create a feeling of simplicity—a process that turned out to be far from easy. "This idea of keeping the words simple was quite frightening to me," Costello said. "I'm used to hiding behind mannerisms and gestures and rhyme schemes." At the beginning of their work on one of the songs, "This House Is Empty Now," Bacharach sang the word "remember" while playing a passage on the piano; that single utterance stayed with Costello and virtually determined the lyrical outcome of the song. In addition to being a story about people breaking up, Costello said, the song reflected his own fears of not measuring up: "I was afraid that at the most exciting prospect in my life musically, there would be no answer lyrically. That's why the song means so much to me, because when I worked it out that solved the problem, and then everything flowed."

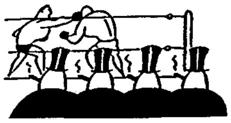
Bacharach, for his part, said that he tried to make his melodies a little easier for mere mortals to sing. "In the past, I've made things more complicated than I should have. In 'Promises, Promises,' say—I made that really hard on singers. Maybe Dionne could get through it, but other singers were under duress the whole way. I like to challenge listeners, but I don't want to wear them out."

Costello said he's noticed that women have responded to the new album in a more emotional way than they have to his other music. He thought that might have something to do with the Bacharach aura. He said, "There's an elegance and a gentleness to the way the music is expressed that comes out in his presence." Costello's aura is a little different: "I do seem to scare people. I don't know why. I always have, since I was a kid. People react to Burt in a much more affectionate way." He wasn't bothered by this, though, and he said he'd be glad if Bacharach's appeal expanded his audience: "If a consequence of working with Burt is that the Burt love vibe brings in the babes, that's fine."

—NANCY FRANKLIN

ON THE ROPES

A contender takes it on the chin at the Garden.



THE fight crowd, which a generation ago relocated to the casino cities, made a rare appearance at the Garden recently to witness, among other events, the bout between Eduardo Morales and Sugar Shane Mosley, the lightweight champion.

Morales was visiting New York for the first time. He and a small band of seconds had arrived a week earlier, on the overnight Aerolineas Argentinas flight from Buenos Aires, where Morales lives. The group encamped at the Howard Johnson's on Eighth Avenue.

Morales, who is twenty-seven, had never boxed professionally outside Argentina. He had fought twenty-six times without a loss, and was now the International Boxing Federation's top-ranked contender at a hundred and thirty-five pounds. Morales was a promoter's dream: a proved fighter whom very few people here had ever seen fight, and who had built an impressive record against fighters no one had ever heard of. In other words, Morales was a man well cast in a supporting role in what was, in truth, Sugar Shane Mosley's show. For Mosley, who is also twenty-seven and holds the I.B.F. title, there are reasonable expectations of important fights against better-known opponents.

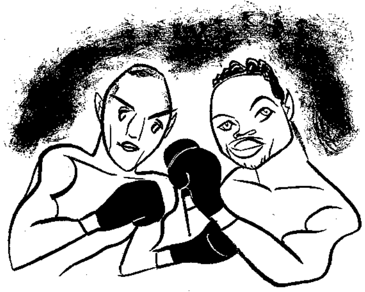
In the rarest of circumstances before a championship fight, Morales and Mosley were seconded to the same training gym, the Kingsway, on Twenty-eighth Street. The two men—Morales, who has a small, haunted face, and Mosley, who has striking gray eyes and a ready smile—nodded their hellos and studied each other. Mosley, eager to project an image of civility, allowed that Morales seemed "a classy type of person." Then, clinically, he noted that Morales tended to telegraph his punches, setting up his left hook by drawing his right shoulder forward. "He is somewhat limited," Mosley said. For his part, Morales was dazzled by the champion. "He's very fast," he observed, "and very strong."

Even with several championships at stake, the card's pull was not about to fill the Garden's main arena. So the gathering took place downstairs, in the "theatre." Morales was accompanied to the ring by three men holding a blue-and-white Argentine flag and by his trainer, Amilcar Brusa, who is best known for training the great Argentine middleweight Carlos Monzon. Brusa, a tall, dour man of seventy-five, approached the fight with a tired fatalism and later admitted that the only chance his man had stood was to land a lucky punch.

It did not come. The disparity in skill was apparent from the opening bell. Mosley danced and Morales plodded. Morales could not reach the champion, who began beating welts onto his forehead.

Mosley dropped Morales with a left hook to the liver in the third round, and many at ringside thought that he would stay down. Yet he rose, his courage duly noted—"Tough guy" and "He came to fight," the ringside wags said—and finished the round. He somehow endured continued beatings in the fourth, before going down a second and last time, in the fifth. His handlers later told the referee they were grateful that he stopped the fight.

In his dressing room, Morales admitted that he had never experienced a night such as this, against so skilled an opponent. "I tried to motivate myself," he said, through an interpreter. Of the first punch that floored him, Morales remarked, "When you get hit like that you get desperate." Still, he was surprisingly chipper. The welts on his forehead did not bother him. And, as is almost always the case with fighters who feel that they have held nothing back, he felt no shame in losing. Besides, he added, he thought he had landed a few decent punches.



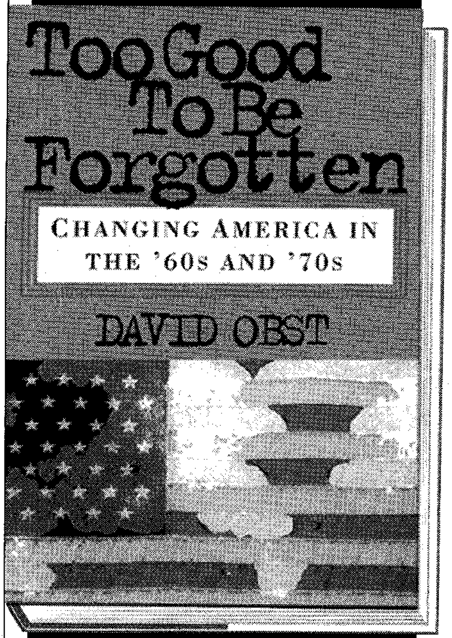
Eduardo Morales and Sugar Shane Mosley

He pulled on his black sweatpants. He returned to the Howard Johnson's to pack. He was gone the next day, on the night flight back home.

—MICHAEL SHAPIRO

"Whether it be My Lai, Watergate, The Pentagon Papers...

Obst seems to be in the middle of it. To understand this period, *Too Good To Be Forgotten* is a must read."
—Seymour M. Hersh



"David Obst is as crazy as the period he writes about. His stories make me both proud and ashamed to be part of his generation."
—P.J. O'Rourke

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THE POLITICAL SCENE

THE VISION THING

The Bush brothers are trying to steer their party in a new direction—the same trick that Bill Clinton once used against their father.

BY JOE KLEIN

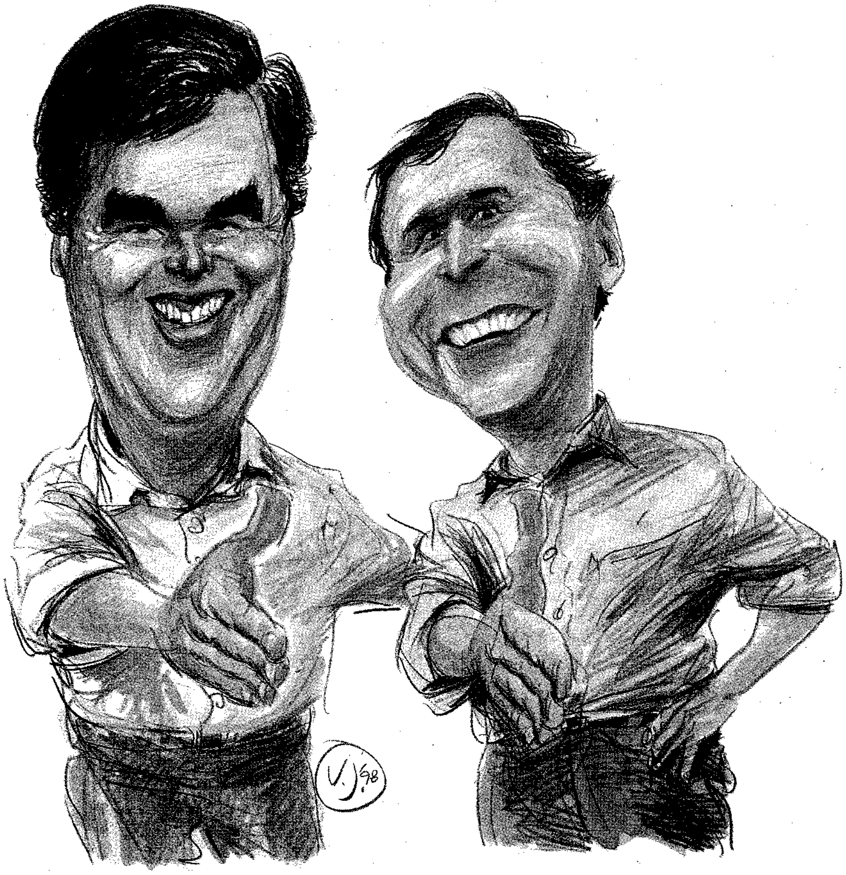
IT is almost painful to watch American politicians at work in this year of our national embarrassment. The perfunctory ceremonies of the stump seem more threadbare than ever—exposed and diminished by the Technicolor disaster unfolding in Washington. A few weeks ago, for example, the city of Lakeland, Florida, attempted to arouse some public interest in the electoral process with its annual "Politics in the Park" night in a downtown square. There were buttons and balloons, Dixieland music, and food provided by local restaurants. The crowd was patchy, at best—maybe several hundred people. They offered polite applause as candidates for everything from school board to governor paraded, in a blur of smiles and bland ambition, across a stage made to look like the back of an old-fashioned campaign train—but the combination of Dixieland and whistle-stop nostalgia seemed kitschy and anachronistic, the political equivalent of a cavalcade of antique cars. The candidates were allowed brief speeches, yet none chose to thump the tub; they gave sheepish waves, and wandered off.

The only relief from the sepia gloom was provided by a tall, dark-eyed, smooth-voiced, and supremely casual young man who, after his turn onstage, set up shop just to the right of the platform—and soon was engaged in a series of intense conversations with members of the audience. This was John Ellis Bush, known as Jeb, the forty-five-year-old Republican candidate for governor of Florida, who is also the son of former President George Bush and the younger brother of George W. Bush, the current governor of Texas. But at that moment he seemed neither son of nor brother of but sui generis: there was an unusual intimacy to his interactions with the crowd; people appeared to expect more from him than a handshake—they wanted to tell him their life stories and complain and argue and receive solace. And, unlike most smile-and-a-handshake politicians, he seemed to welcome the personal details—paradoxically, he seemed reminiscent of the young Bill Clinton. There were heated conversations about health care and school vouchers (which Bush favors, in a limited way); three different women approached him, each with a horror story about Florida's child-welfare system, a subject he seemed prepared to discuss in great detail. "See, this is the stuff people are interested in," he said, turning to me, after the third woman—a victim of domestic abuse—had departed tearily, squeezing his hand and thanking him for his interest. "Not Bill Clinton."

Bush's comment seemed a bit of wishful thinking, but it was also a reflection of his campaign's unexpected successes this year: Jeb and George W. Bush, both of whom appear to be headed for smashing victories in their respective states, are among the few politicians who have transcended the disaster in Washington and are generating something that approaches public enthusiasm. Earlier, at a private reception for the candidates held at the Citrus & Chemical Bank, several Democrats complained that the Clinton scandal was suffocating their efforts. "I go door-to-door every night, and it's the only thing people want to talk about," Kim Grady, a Democrat running for state representative, said. "One night, a guy on a bicycle followed me around, pestering me about it. He wouldn't stop until he found out what I thought." (He seemed pleased, she said, when she admitted that she hoped the President would resign.)

Grady introduced me to Rick Dantzler, who is running for lieutenant governor on the Democratic ticket. "It's been hard to get people to focus on the issues," Dantzler said, more downcast than a politician should ever seem in public. “It’s too early to tell if the enthusiasm level for Democrats will suffer because of the scandal.”

In normal times, these sorts of statements would be considered suicidal: politicians never admit the possibility of a lack of interest in their campaigns. But the Clinton scandal has depressed the political market, and thrown a scare into most practitioners. There are very few Happy Warriors, in either party, this year; the public is too disgusted with all politicians for anyone to feel very comfortable. (The Republicans who hope to profit from the scandal, like Newt Gingrich, seem more ravenous than joyous.)



In the Sun Belt, Jeb (left) and George W. are reaching out to the poor, especially to Hispanics and to African-Americans.

VICTOR JUHASZ

By contrast, there is a freshness to both Bush campaigns. The brothers seem to have stumbled across an electoral formula and a new political vocabulary—independent of each other, they insist—that may constitute the most creative and humane Republican response to Clinton’s successful effort to recast the Democrats as the party of the middle class: they are reaching out, with some success, to the poor, especially to Hispanics (both brothers speak Spanish) and to African-Americans. They spend a surprising amount of time discussing the very sorts of issues—education, children’s services, economic development—that their father never seemed much interested in as President. They remain conservatives, they insist; they also promise low taxes and limited government. Still, there is none of the harsh moralism and country-club exclusivity that have marked Sun Belt Republicanism in the past, and there is a determined emphasis on solving the social problems that Republicans often ignore. They would do this in a manner that many Democrats reject, by circumventing the fossilized public bureaucracies and channelling money directly to local charitable agencies or, in some cases, by providing the poor with vouchers. Politicians can endlessly debate the details of how to “deliver” services, but the poor don’t read the fine print—in both Florida and Texas, they seem thrilled to be getting attention from a heretofore unimaginable political source. And the sight of two privileged sons of an American dynasty being embraced by some of the least privileged Americans has created an excitement that might well have national implications. “When you consider that the Republican message in Texas has been delivered in the past by people like Phil Graham, Dick Armey, and Tom DeLay,” William Kristol, the editor of the conservative *Weekly Standard,* said, “I’d say that George W. represents a significant departure.”

A leading religious conservative told me, “The Bush brothers have done a better job than other Republicans of taking the cultural message of traditional values and responsibility and weaving it into a broader, seamless web of minority outreach. When you test their message, it works better among minorities than it does among white voters.”

“SEE, I believe in the ‘vision thing,’ ” Governor George W. Bush said with a sly grin as we travelled in a small plane from Austin, Texas, to a courthouse rededication in the town of Gatesville. He was referring, of course, to his father’s famous disdain for high-minded rhetoric. “I believe in it passionately,” he added, more seriously. “I think ideas matter a lot, I’m hungry for new ideas, and I’ll tell you why. The shelf life of success in this business is a nanosecond. You can’t sit on your laurels.” He was thinking, no doubt, of his father’s relative inactivity after his Gulf War triumph. “People are intrigued by new ideas. Right now in Texas we’re having a good debate about whether to end ‘social promotion’ in the schools”—the practice of promoting children despite failing grades, which Bush has challenged vehemently, over the objection of some teachers. “But you’ve got to be able to discuss these things in terms people can understand. And they have to be things that lift people up. You can’t lead by dividing—and both parties have been guilty of that. You may be able to win an election by dividing, but you can’t lead.”

George W. Bush is a solid six feet tall, but seems smaller. He is scruffier and far more intense than his younger brother; he speaks in a hoarse Texas twang, wears cowboy boots (Jeb wears black tasselled loafers), and has a thin-lipped mouth that seems to have been made for spitting tobacco. In recent magazine articles—and there have been more than a few, since he is leading most of the early polls for the Republican Presidential nomination in the year 2000—George, who is a

TINKER
Levin

"Give this to Evers and see that he passes it on to Chance when he's finished."

month older than Bill Clinton, has admitted to a misspent youth and a period of heavy drinking, although he has refused to "inventory" the sordid details. (He once joked that his father's idea of a perfect son was Al Gore.) And he has expressed some reservations about running for President in an atmosphere where sordid details have become the coin of the realm.

"There are no bounds to the discourse," he told me, referring to the current atmosphere in Washington. "The written word has been undermined by the spoken word—you have this plethora of TV stations and plethora of talking heads doing 'Crossfire, Jr.,' and everyone's trying to outdo one another.... So I'm conflicted about it. Not because I'm worried about my own background. I've been a devoted dad, a loyal husband. But do I want to expose my family to all that? I'm not so sure."

Later, in a quieter mood, as we flew from Paris, Texas, to Wichita Falls, Bush said, "I have twin sixteen-year-old daughters, and they hate this. If I were going to run, they'd be eighteen—the time of life when you want *out*, want some privacy, some separation from your parents. And, believe me, there's no way out if your dad's running for President. I was much older than they are when my dad was President, and you always felt the restrictions. You were always in the fishbowl, never free. All of us felt that. I remember the night Dad lost in 1992. We were crushed and angry and felt awful for him, but I remember my mother saying, with some relief, 'Well, at least *that's* over.'"

Somehow, one suspects, George W. Bush will conquer these reservations. He has been a remarkably successful politician; he is leading his current opponent, state Land Commissioner Garry Mauro, by fifty-one points in the latest polls. A slew of Democrats have endorsed Bush, including the state's lieutenant governor, Bob Bullock (who is the godfather of one of Mauro's children). In stark contrast to California's governor, Pete Wilson, Bush has refused to deny social services to illegal immigrants, and he has proselytized against those who would stigmatize Mexican-Americans. Reginald Blow, of the *North Texas Journal,* an African-American weekly in Wichita Falls, told me, "He got nineteen per cent of the African-American vote in 1994, and I'd guess he'll get thirty per cent this time. He's some sort of New Age Republican. He's not threatened by black people."

On the stump, speaking to a series of fairly typical Republican audiences, Bush gives them what they want—the promise of a two-billion-dollar tax cut from the state's estimated $3.6-billion surplus—but he also gives them what they may not be so interested in: a billion dollars to improve the public schools, especially to increase reading skills in poor neighborhoods. He speaks passionately, and at length, about education, "which has to be, for a governor, what national defense is for the President—the top priority." He talks about his social-policy innovations: he was the first governor, for example, to take advantage of the "charitable choice" provisions in the Clinton welfare-reform law, which enabled him to contract out some local welfare services with private, nonprofit charitable groups. He has also given Charles Colson's Prison Fellowship, which has a strong record in reducing recidivism, a contract to run part of a state prison. ("Too early to tell what the results are," he says to me later.) He's easy on the stump, quick and informal; he's easy with reporters, too—although that may change as the efforts to limn what he calls his "party animal" past grow more relentless.

Back in the plane, I asked him how he'd go about making the decision to run for President. Whom would he consult? "No one," he said. "Not a soul. You can't ask around about something like that. It's a gut check. You wake up one morning and you're there—or you're not."

THIS, of course, is not the first time the Bush brothers have run simultaneously for the governorship of their respective states. In 1994, they challenged two popular Democratic incumbents—Ann Richards, in Texas, and Lawton Chiles, in Florida. Jeb was said to have the better chance, and a brighter political future. But George won and Jeb lost—narrowly, and through some chicanery. (Chiles later apologized for using telephone "push-polling" to promote a negative message about Bush under the guise of an opinion survey.) Jeb Bush also lost because he came across as callow, harsh, and ideological. Reporters in Florida remember when Jeb was asked what he would do to help the African-American community and he replied, "Probably nothing."

"Boy, is this different from that campaign," said Jim Ash, who covers Tallahassee for the Gannett News Service. Indeed, for a Republican—and even for many Democrats I've seen—Jeb Bush now spends a startling amount of stump time talking about the problems of poor people, especially poor children.

"I'm not doing this because I've made a tactical decision about how to campaign," Jeb told me, coughing and sweating through a bout of the flu in a chilled hotel hallway after a luncheon speech. "It's really based on what I've seen over the past four years."

By all accounts, Bush has seen quite a bit. He never really stopped running for governor after the loss to Chiles, and worked assiduously to overcome the unpleasant impression he had left in 1994. But somewhere along the way—perhaps in Miami's Liberty City ghetto, where he co-founded a charter school with T. Willard Fair, the president of the local Urban League—the firsthand experience of poverty and race may have overtaken political calculation. "I would walk into the class, and a kid would come up to me and touch my skin or feel my hair, and it happened every day that I was there," Bush told the *Jewish Journal*, a Florida weekly. "This just blew me away. What kind of place do we live in where a six-year-old child hasn't touched a white person before?"

Now he routinely surprises audiences with his sense of social purpose. "Every chance we get, we should do what Nixon did—go to China, do the unexpected, get beyond our comfort zone," he told an audience of women's organizations in West Palm Beach. For one thing, Bush said, he would rethink the child-welfare system. "We have sixty thousand cases of child abuse in the state. Last year, sixty children were murdered by their adult guardians. Children were shaken to death for soiling their diapers. Children were beaten to death for spilling their juice," he said, quietly. The audience was silent, rapt. "It's time to put aside labels and admit the system has failed.... In the past, we've defined compassion by how much money we've spent and how many rules we've enacted, instead of by results. But true compassion means suffering with the poor and acting on the consciousness of your suffering—and we should shift power away from the bureaucracy to the people in the compassionate community who actually deal with these problems. We contract out with experts to build our highways. Why not contract out with the people who are doing the best job dealing with problems like foster care or education in communities where the current system isn't working?"

No doubt, Jeb Bush has continued working the usual Republican precincts—he has raised seven million dollars so far, twice as much as his Democratic opponent, Lieutenant Governor Buddy MacKay—and his positions on traditional conservative issues like abortion and gun control remain traditionally conservative (although he has refused to sign a no-tax pledge). But the day I spent with him also included the following: a visit to a predominantly black public school in Pompano Beach; an endorsement by a young African-American Democratic state representative named Chris Smith ("Getting a governor who has ideas that will help my district is worth the grief I'll get from my party," he told me); and a visit with parole officers. He has also been trying to woo the retirees in the condos that line the coast from Miami to Palm Beach, and recently won the endorsement of the *Jewish Journal*, somewhat to the editor's amazement: "Jeb Bush for governor. This may sound odd coming from a Jewish newspaper.... The short of it is that Jeb Bush is a *mensch*."

IT is easy to lose perspective in the cocoon of a campaign. Almost every audience is a friendly audience; almost every politician knows how to push the right buttons. As George W. Bush marches through Texas, he is bombarded by people telling him to run for President. As Jeb Bush traverses Florida, he is surprised by the emotional reactions he receives—especially from those who never thought they'd support a Republican for office. But the enthusiasm is coming from a relative handful of people still interested enough in politics to listen to what a politician has to say. Very rarely does the poison—the apathy, the cynicism—loosed by the Clinton scandal penetrate the cocoon. But it is everywhere, and it diminishes all politicians, even the sons of the man Bill Clinton defeated. Perhaps it diminishes them more than most—because they are young and attractive and raising the same sorts of expectations that Bill Clinton did. ♦

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ANNALS OF MEDICINE

A HEALING HELL

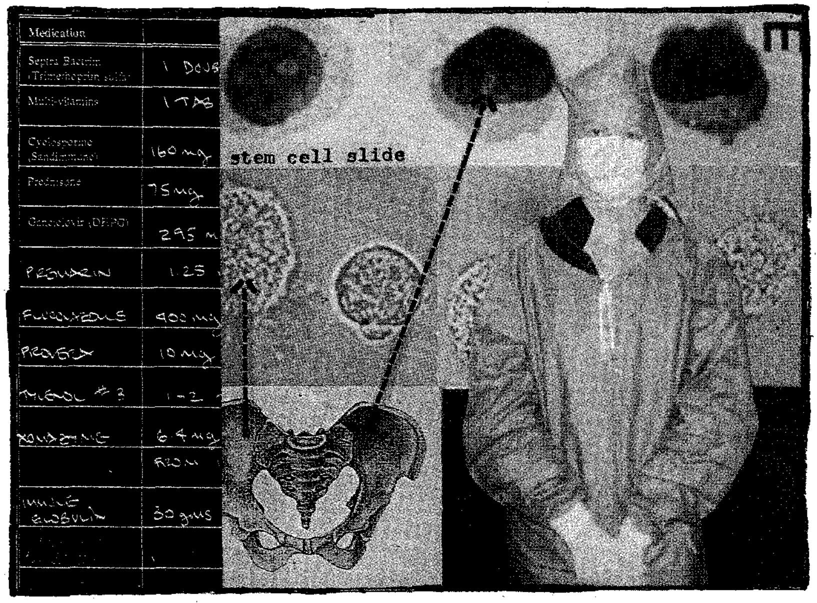
Bone-marrow transplantation may be the worst treatment in all of modern medicine—and the best.

BY JEROME GROOPMAN

COURTNEY STEVENS was a high-school sophomore in Monroe, North Carolina, when she found out she had a disease that would probably kill her. The first signs were subtle—she had lost her usual edge and endurance in varsity tennis and track—but six months later the cause of her fatigue was identified. She had leukemia, a cancer of the bone marrow's white blood cells, which causes the cells to proliferate wildly and fill the bone-marrow cavity. The result is to stop marrow from performing its normal function, a vital one: the manufacture of every component of our blood and our immune system.

"The doctors in Charlotte said that my only chance to live was a bone-marrow transplant," Courtney told me not long ago, speaking in something between a lilt and a drawl. Destroying the leukemia would require radiation and chemotherapy at levels that would also destroy all of her remaining normal marrow cells. Essentially, Courtney had to be treated to the point of death. She would then be rescued with bone marrow taken from a healthy donor.

Courtney imagined that a graft meant taking a piece of bone with its gelatinous marrow and surgically implanting it in her body. Actually, a bone-marrow preparation is infused into a vein; once it's in the bloodstream, the cells will home in on the marrow space. And what's infused often isn't bone marrow as such but a painstakingly separated component of bone marrow—its stem cells. Under a microscope, stem cells look undistinguished—they're small and round with robin's-egg-blue cytoplasm and a squat nucleus—but they can perform acts of biological resurrection. Unlike other cell types in the body, which die off after dividing a few dozen times, a single stem cell has the ability to reproduce itself indefinitely. Its progeny can also abjure immortality and turn into ordinary blood cells—red cells, white cells, and platelets. As a result, a relatively small population of stem cells can completely reconstitute a host's blood and immune system. Indeed, in some laboratory experiments a single stem cell has spawned the half-trillion blood cells of an entire mouse.



A grim clinical equation: the stronger the cancer, the more punishing the treatment.

STEVEN DANA

A successful graft requires stem cells from a donor who is genetically compatible with the recipient. Unfortunately, nobody in Courtney's family proved to be a good match, which significantly reduced the likelihood of a successful treatment. "My parents and I prayed on it real hard," Courtney, a devout Baptist, went on to tell me. "And then we did a lot of research." Both her mother and her father are health-insurance agents, and they concluded that her best chance would be at the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center, in Seattle. There Courtney was cared for by the clinical director, Fred Appelbaum, who set about finding a donor from the National Marrow Donor Program. Some three million people now participate in the program, which means they have been genetically typed and have agreed to donate marrow if they are called upon. It's no small commitment: you must typically undergo general anesthesia as the marrow-rich bones of your pelvis are repeatedly punctured by a large-bore trocar.

In late December, Courtney was "conditioned" to receive stem cells from an anonymous donor: her diseased marrow was destroyed by radiation applied to her whole body and by high doses of chemotherapy. Left without any immune defenses after this treatment, she was placed in what she calls a "bubble"—a special laminar airflow isolation room. "It was a complete nightmare," she recalled. "For days, I'd be on all fours and just retch and retch." Her skin was badly burned by the total-body radiation, and the drugs made her delirious. "I looked like a lobster, and thought I had bugs crawling on me. I'd hit myself and scream." The hardest part for her, though, was being removed from human contact. Visitors are strictly limited, and those who enter must wear special masks, gloves, and tight-fitting gowns. "I was in that sterile bubble, and forgot what skin against skin felt like. That was lost. I just wanted to hold on to my mom or dad, like a two-year-old, and I couldn't."

Other problems lay ahead. Though the anonymous donor's graft swiftly "took," the white blood cells spawned by the graft started to attack Courtney's own tissues. It was less that she was rejecting her graft than that the graft was rejecting her—an often fatal condition called graft-versus-host disease. Most of the damage occurs in the bowel, the liver, and the skin. "I had terrible diarrhea, a blistering rash all over my body, and jaundice," Courtney recounted. "I was the color of an egg yolk." Dr. Appelbaum gave her immunosuppressive medications, but he didn't want to restrain her newly spawned immune system completely, for the marauding immune cells were also likely to target any leukemic cells that might have survived.

Twenty-eight days after receiving the donor marrow, Courtney Stevens was discharged from the hospital. When she entered the hospital, she had been "in great shape" from her varsity athletics; now she couldn't mount a short flight of stairs. But she believed that she was going to survive. "I was the youngest of the twenty on my floor at the Fred Hutchinson Center," she told me, and then she paused. "I can tell you name after name that passed away. Only three made it."

IN the almost three decades since a "war on cancer" was proclaimed, most of the advances in the field have been disappointingly incremental. Only recently has there been a sense that strides, and not just steps, are being made. For all the talk of "breakthroughs," however, the clinical realities continue to mock our dreams and adhere to a grim equation: the stronger the cancer, the more punishing the treatment.

Bone-marrow transplantation remains the most powerful weapon in the growing arsenal against cancer. In the past couple of decades, I have guided a great many patients through the procedure and seen results that appeared nearly miraculous. Nevertheless, I cannot regard it without a measure of horror. It is a treatment of last resort. Even when all goes well, it represents an experience beyond our ordinary imaginings—the ordeal of chemotherapy taken to a near-lethal extreme. I first performed the procedure in 1978, as a hematology-oncology fellow at the University of California at Los Angeles, where I spent four months a year on the transplant ward. U.C.L.A.'s marrow-transplantation program was then the second-largest in the nation, after the Hutchinson Center, and our success rates were enviable. But I quickly realized that it was the most devastating treatment that the human body could be subjected to. My memory is still haunted by my first patient, who was a cheerful young Japanese-American woman with leukemia. After she underwent total-body radiation, I never saw her smile again. Her graft was slow in taking, and we were unable to sustain a healthy level of blood platelets, with the result that her blood wasn't able to clot properly. She hemorrhaged into her lungs, we couldn't stop the bleeding, and her protracted agony—a clinically induced one—ended in death.

These days, the bulk of my clinical practice involves patients with cancer and AIDS, and I suppose I am as battle-hardened as most people in those fields. Even so, the emotional demands of attending to marrow transplantation are simply of a different order. My third transplant patient this year was a close friend of mine; and it occurred to me that if she died from the procedure I might not have the emotional reserves to do another.

On an icy January morning of this year, Tamar Lowenstein, as I'll call her, flew, with her husband, from their home in Washington, D.C., to Boston, in order to meet with David Avigan, the director of bone-marrow transplantation at my hospital. Tamar was a thirty-nine-year-old corporate lawyer and the mother of three young children, and I'd known her for more than two decades. I sat beside her during the consultation both as a friend and as a physician who would help manage her treatment. For over a year, she'd been living with widely metastatic breast cancer, and had been evaluated at several first-rank medical centers. At each, she was told that in the normal course of things her condition was incurable. A statuesque woman with a no-nonsense manner, Tamar looked alert but drawn. She had been receiving chemotherapy every two or three weeks since the summer for the cancer, which had spread to her liver and her ribs, vertebrae, and skull. She was here because she knew that, given standard measures, she would very likely be dead within two years, and perhaps much sooner. If she submitted herself to the ordeal of bone-marrow transplantation there was a chance that she could be cured.

THE technology of marrow transplantation was conceived mainly in a dog kennel in Cooperstown, New York, during the nineteen-fifties. A young Harvard-trained physician, E. Donnall Thomas, had retreated to a

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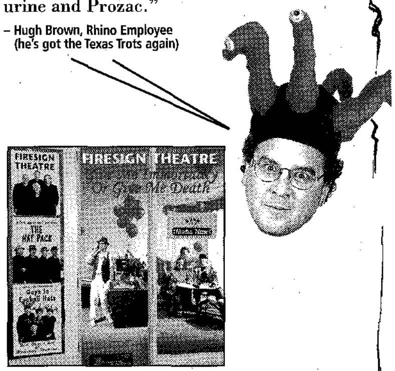

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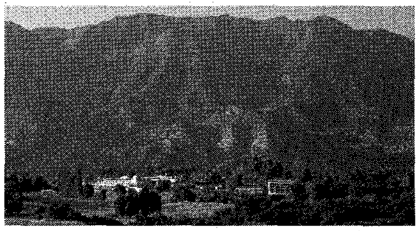

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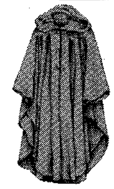

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hospital there to work on a research problem that had eluded a generation of blood specialists. Although red blood cells could be successfully transfused from a compatible donor to a needy recipient, marrow cells could not: the body would identify them as foreign invaders and destroy them. Solving this problem wasn't merely an academic pursuit. In the wake of Hiroshima, the effects of intense radiation were a topic of urgent national interest, and it turned out that a primary reason the atomic bomb was so deadly was that its radiation destroyed the bone-marrow cells of its victims. As a result, the victims succumbed to hemorrhage from a lack of platelets or to infections from a lack of white cells. If new marrow could be supplied—and new blood cells produced—victims of radiation might be saved.

It was a more immediate wartime exigency—the need for doctors—that had led the government to subsidize medical education during the forties, and thus enabled Don Thomas, a poor kid from Texas, to attend Harvard Medical School. Then came a residency at the affiliated Brigham Hospital, where he watched helplessly as patient after patient, mostly children and young adults, succumbed to leukemia. In those days, there were only a few primitive chemotherapeutic agents, such as nitrogen mustard, which was derived from the mustard gas used in trench warfare. It quickly became apparent that although such drugs killed leukemic cells, they also killed normal marrow cells. Thomas believed that providing new, healthy bone marrow would prove essential to curing leukemia.

Thomas, who in 1990 received the Nobel Prize for his work, is a quiet man with deep-set eyes and a close-cropped white beard; he is now approaching his seventy-ninth birthday. When I spoke to him recently, he compared his move from Harvard to Cooperstown to the move his pioneer grandparents had made when they migrated in a covered wagon from the East to rural Texas: he says that he, too, was "looking for the freedom to set your own agenda."

He wasn't the only scientist working on marrow transplantation in those days, but he may have been the most persistent. After testing various transplant techniques with dogs, he attempted transplants in human patients who had late-stage leukemia. Then, in 1959, when he'd put in four years of research at Cooperstown, he and his colleagues decided to stop human marrow transplantation except between identical twins. "Things were pretty grim," Thomas concedes. Every one of his patients who had undergone transplantation for leukemia died during the procedure or shortly thereafter. Indeed, a review of the first two hundred attempts, in centers around the world, to transplant human marrow among nonidentical siblings found no successes. Only the fortunate few patients who had identical twins—and so could receive marrow that was perfectly genetically compatible—survived the procedure.

Eight years later, in 1967, Thomas, who was by then in Seattle, at the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Center and the University of Washington, decided to resume his attempts at transplants. During the preceding years, he had made important advances with his Cooperstown dogs. He had identified genetic markers on white blood cells—markers of "histocompatibility"—that permitted close matching of donor and recipient, and had observed consistently successful grafts among littermates in his kennel. Facing down a barrage of criticism from prominent scientists, he set about assembling a medical team that would be dedicated to the demanding care of patients undergoing transplantation. "I still believed there might be a cure for leukemia," Thomas says. He was soon proved right.

AUTUMN'S SIDEREAL, NOVEMBER'S A BALL AND CHAIN

After the leaves have fallen, the sky turns blue again,
Blue as a new translation of Longinus on the sublime.
We wink and work back from its edges.
We walk around
Under its sequence of metaphors,
Looking immaculately up for the overlooked.
Or looking not so immaculately down for the same thing.

If there's nothing going on, there's no reason to make it up.
Back here, for instance, next to the cankered limbs of the plum trees,
We take a load off.
Hard frost on the grass blades and wild onion,
Invisibly intricate, so clear.
Pine needles in herringbone, dead lemon leaves, dead dirt.
The metaphysical world is meaningless today,

South wind retelling its autobiography
endlessly
Through the white pines, somesuch and susurration. Sh-h-h. Sh-h-h...

—Charles Wright

It takes some two years for a new marrow graft to mature into a fully competent immune system. Eighteen months after leaving the hospital, Courtney Stevens fell ill with chicken pox. "I was really sick," she recalls. "Just covered with it. My fevers were sky-high." As a rule, people who had chicken pox as children still have the virus in their bodies; their immune systems have learned to keep it dormant. Once Courtney's original immune system was wiped out, she was vulnerable to a recurrence. It took high doses of antiviral drugs to subdue the infection.

If Courtney's bone-marrow transplant illustrates how many things can go wrong during the course of treatment, it illustrates, too, how successful medicine has become at coping with complications. Yet, even for those luckier than she was, transplantation is a long process, and patients generally spend a month or more in the hospital and then a hundred days closely monitored as outpatients. Courtney was determined to stay abreast of her studies during this time, and so was tutored in Seattle. After she returned home to North Carolina, she made the honor roll every semester.

Just a year after Courtney's transplant, she and her donor exchanged letters. (The National Marrow Donor Program stipulates that the identities of the donor and the recipient be kept from each other for at least a year following the transplant.) Courtney learned that the donor was a registered pharmacist at a Seattle pediatric hospital.

At Courtney's graduation from Monroe High School, the graduates, in red academic gowns and mortarboards, sat with their families on a hot Carolina afternoon. When Courtney ascended the stage, the principal announced her name, and then stepped aside. Taking his place in front of Courtney was a petite woman in her thirties with chestnut hair and brown eyes. Courtney knew immediately who she was. So did the other graduates, and they tossed their mortarboards in the air as Courtney embraced her donor. Courtney, her classmates were well aware, had gone through a kind of hell; and now she was back.

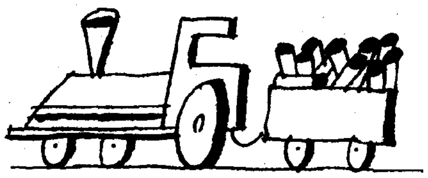
BONE-MARROW transplants that use the host's own marrow are categorized as "autologous." As a rule, autologous grafts aren't optimal for conditions such as leukemia—the conditions for which the transplant procedure was originally devised—because such a graft could simply reintroduce the disease. Some fifteen years ago, however, researchers started to explore the use of autologous grafts in the treatment of other kinds of cancers. Standard chemotherapy, they realized, was limited largely because of its destructive effects on the marrow. Marrow cells, like cancer cells, divide rapidly, and chemotherapy drugs generally target dividing cells. But if you had the ability to replenish the marrow, through autologous grafts, you could administer the drugs at levels that would otherwise prove lethal. Suddenly, the prospects for treating cancer changed dramatically: formerly incurable cancer—stubborn metastatic tumors that had resisted normal, survivable doses of chemotherapy or radiation—might succumb to extraordinary doses. Right now, that was Tamar Lowenstein's best chance for survival.

David Avigan, a wiry man with boyish black curls and a gentle mien, chose his words with practiced precision as he presented the hypothesis that reaching extreme levels of toxicity might overcome the cancer's known resistance to standard regimens, and reviewed with Tamar the available data. "Let's take the most conservative approach in assessing this outcome rather than presenting the best statistics," he told her. "Preliminary evidence indicates that some twenty per cent of women have a five-year disease-free survival. Are they truly cured, meaning the cancer will never come back? No one can say. Are there complications of the high doses of chemotherapy that can result in fatal diseases later in life? Yes." So there was a better than even chance that despite a prolonged and harrowing treatment she would die of cancer anyway. On the other hand, she knew that a standard regimen would retard the cancer's progression somewhat and that, in its final stages, a morphine drip would enable as easeful and painfree a decline as was possible. Those were the alternatives.

Tamar listened intently, and occasionally jotted notes in her diary. Her husband, Daniel, stood up and paced, explaining that he was too tense to sit.

I had recused myself from the discussion. Tamar and Daniel both knew that I favored going ahead with the transplant, but I was afraid our friendship would impair my ability to present objectively what she faced. The complications of the treatment could not be easily controlled; its course could not be easily predicted; and there would be no turning back. Now Tamar, having listened carefully to Dr. Avigan, decided to go ahead with it.

Fortunately, we were able to spare her the usual procedure of boring into her pelvic bones to collect stem cells. Through the use of a new technique—"peripheral blood-stem-cell transplantation"—the cells were obtained from her circulating blood, having been coaxed out of the marrow by a special regimen of drugs. Forty litres of her circulating blood were then filtered through a machine that skimmed off stem cells. At the end, we had more than twenty million of them—more than enough. The stem cells would be stored in liquid nitrogen until we needed them.



Tamar kissed her children goodbye, explaining that she would be gone for a long while and then hoped to come back better. She arrived at the hospital believing that she had prepared herself for the procedure. She would soon learn what I had learned: that it is not a procedure for which anyone can be prepared.

WE administered four days of chemotherapy at levels ten times as high as could be given in standard settings; only when the poison had cleared from her blood were her stem cells thawed and infused. I visited Tamar each morning and evening, and watched as she was brought as close to death as was clinically sustainable.

"It's getting worse every hour," she said miserably, several days after the last dose; the maximum impact of chemotherapy comes about a week after its administration. Her lips were so blistered that even speaking was painful. Her eyes were sunken, and her body trembled. She turned to the side of the bed, searching for what's politely called the emesis basin. I found it on her night table, and held it under her quivering chin. A fetid mix of bile and bloody tissue gushed forth. I reached over to help wipe her face. "Be careful," she said, in a small voice. Even the lightest touch was like a searing iron on her burned lips.

I swabbed the vomit first from her chin and from the area around her lips, avoiding the oozing blisters. I then applied a thin layer of Vaseline over her mouth; even through the latex of my gloves I could feel the heat.

Tamar had a raging fever, reaching 104° F. at times during the day. The extraordinary amounts of chemotherapy had produced a chemical burn throughout her gastrointestinal tract, from mouth to rectum. Then, taking advantage of her lack of immunity, a fungus began to grow in her macerated gut.

Carol, a nurse specialist on the transplant team, came into the room and told Tamar it was time for her Amphotericin infusion. Amphotericin is a potent antifungal, but it has toxic effects, too. Each infusion caused Tamar to shake with painful rigors and further raised her temperature.

Tamar closed her eyes as a sedative that the nurse had given her prior to the Amphotericin began to take effect. I gripped Tamar's hand and watched the Amphotericin run slowly into her vein.

In less than a minute, Tamar began to shake violently, her teeth audibly gnashing. I gripped her hand harder, but she had no strength for returning the gesture. The nurse gave her more of the sedative, and then began to bathe her skin with alcohol. This was an effort to stem the rising temperature, but it worsened the rigors, and Tamar began to moan.

"I wish I hadn't done it," she breathed. "It was a mistake."

"You'll get through this, Tamar," I told her. "This will pass."

"How long?"

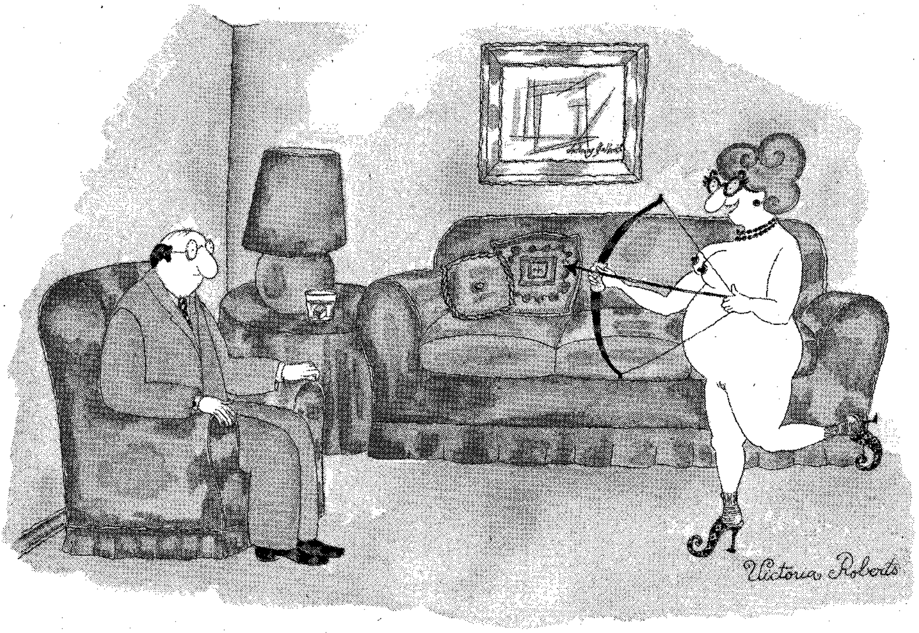
I said I didn't know exactly. Soon, I hoped.

Tamar went without eating for five weeks, because her mouth and stomach were so severely burned that she regurgitated even clear consommé and jello. Her weight dropped by forty-six pounds, and her form became skeletal. We had to feed her by infusing a rich mixture of proteins, sugars, and vitamins into a vein. Over the next two months, she began a slow, steady recovery.

Tamar kept a photograph of Daniel and her children on the table next to her bed. It was this picture that she turned to when she feared that the hell she entered had no end. "I told myself," she said later, "that I must return to the kids."

THE process of returning to the world—a world of ordinary cares and burdens—can represent another kind of complication, particularly because bone-marrow transplantation is not only an extreme procedure but an extremely expensive one. Courtney Stevens, for example, has just completed four years of study at Liberty University, in Lynchburg, Virginia, but she could do so only because she received a scholarship: her family spent all their savings to pay for her transplant. Her parents sold both of their cars, and Courtney's special college fund "went kaput," in her words. Friends and neighbors had held community fund-raisers for her. The bone-marrow transplantation cost more than three hundred thousand dollars, and the family's health-insurance policy would pay only seventy per cent of it.

Having paid steep insurance premiums ever since the transplant, Courtney has now passed the five-year mark with no sign of leukemia, and so is eligible for more standard rates. That's fortunate, because she will soon need cataract surgery. "I have eyes like a seventy-five-year-old," Courtney, who is twenty-three, says, and she laughs, apparently glad that she's still around to have such problems. Cataracts are among the delayed complications of the procedure. Another of them is about a three-per-cent risk that she will develop a second malignancy, from the chemotherapy itself. But Courtney views such concerns with equanimity. "I'm not supposed to be here. And I thank God each day I am."



"I'm having myself sculpted in bronze for your sixtieth birthday."

For the poor, the financial exigencies are, of course, even more acute. Medicaid is a state-based program, and its level of support varies widely from region to region. Several years ago, the State of Oregon declared that it would no longer pay for marrow transplantation, and patients with leukemia crossed the border into Washington, racing to establish residency and qualify for Medicaid there before their disease killed them. Recently, Oregon relented somewhat, and created a priority list of therapies that would be available on a year-to-year basis, depending on the size of the state coffers. Within the category of marrow transplantation, some diseases have been ranked above others; if your particular type of leukemia failed to make the cut, you may be out of luck.

And when transplantation is applied in entirely novel ways to treat currently incurable maladies, even private insurance companies can simply refuse to pay. For example, the Hutchinson Center is exploring the use of marrow transplantation for scleroderma. An unusual and devastating disorder of the immune system, scleroderma is marked by relentless scarring and contraction of the skin, lungs, esophagus, and other organs, until the patient suffocates or starves to death. Because scleroderma is caused by a diseased immune system, the Seattle team reasoned that it might be beneficial to graft healthy donor stem cells that would spawn a new immune system. There is, as yet, no proof that this approach will succeed, but the alternative is grim: fifty per cent of advanced scleroderma patients die within three years of diagnosis. Even so, every one of a total of fourteen scleroderma patients eligible for the experimental treatment at the Hutchinson Center was denied support; three died while waiting for their appeals to be considered by their insurers.

"It's unclear if bone-marrow transplantation could be developed today in the United States, in the face of managed care," Fred Appelbaum told me soberly. What frustrates researchers and clinicians like Appelbaum is that no insurer seems willing to make the up-front investment in clinical research, although all insurers readily reap the financial benefits after it succeeds.

TODAY, nearly four out of five transplant patients who have leukemia and a genetically compatible family donor survive; more than half of those with a matched but unrelated donor, like Courtney, survive, too. And the prospects for patients with otherwise incurable cancers—patients such as Tamar—are improving all the time. In June of this year, a new clinical research building at the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center was dedicated to E. Donnall Thomas. At the ceremony, sitting among the numerous assembled scientists, clinicians, philanthropists, and politicians, were a hundred patients and their families. At one point in the ceremony, they stood up en masse. On behalf of those who survived, and those who did not, they offered silent thanks to Dr. Thomas for persevering.

The astonishing successes of bone-marrow transplantation are, without question, among the most gratifying aspects of contemporary oncology. And yet for all the effort and resources we have devoted to mastering the technique, we can only hope that in another decade or so it will have become obsolete, because something more effective and less punishing has taken its place. In the meantime, we do what we can with what we have.

This September, Tamar Lowenstein returned to my hospital as an outpatient for X-rays and blood tests. The masses of cancer that once appeared as black nebulae on her bone scan had vanished. Her liver was normal, no longer distorted by metastatic deposits. And her strength and weight are gradually returning. As the physical devastation of the transplant begins to wane, so, oddly, do her memories of an ordeal that was in equal measures harrowing and miraculous. Still, it's too early to say that she is truly cured—that her breast cancer will not eventually reëmerge, or that the treatment itself won't someday produce cancer. "I can't focus on either right now," Tamar told me when we last spoke. She maintains that it's enough to rebuild her life, day by day. "What I know is that I wanted the best shot, the only shot, at a cure," she says. "And I've had it." ♦

(This is the first of two reports from the cancer wars.)

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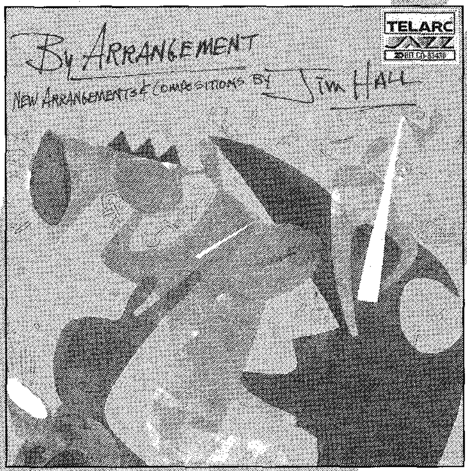

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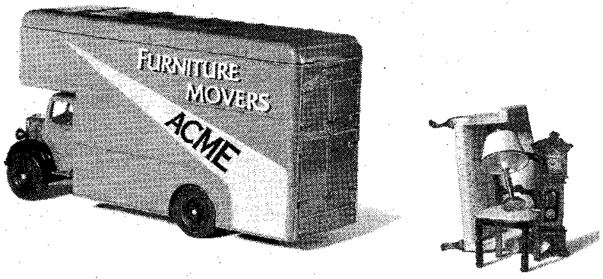

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POSTCARD FROM ROME

COFFEE CLASH

In its planned invasion of Italy, Starbucks is armed with Frappuccinos and Americanos—but will that win over a nation of espresso drinkers?

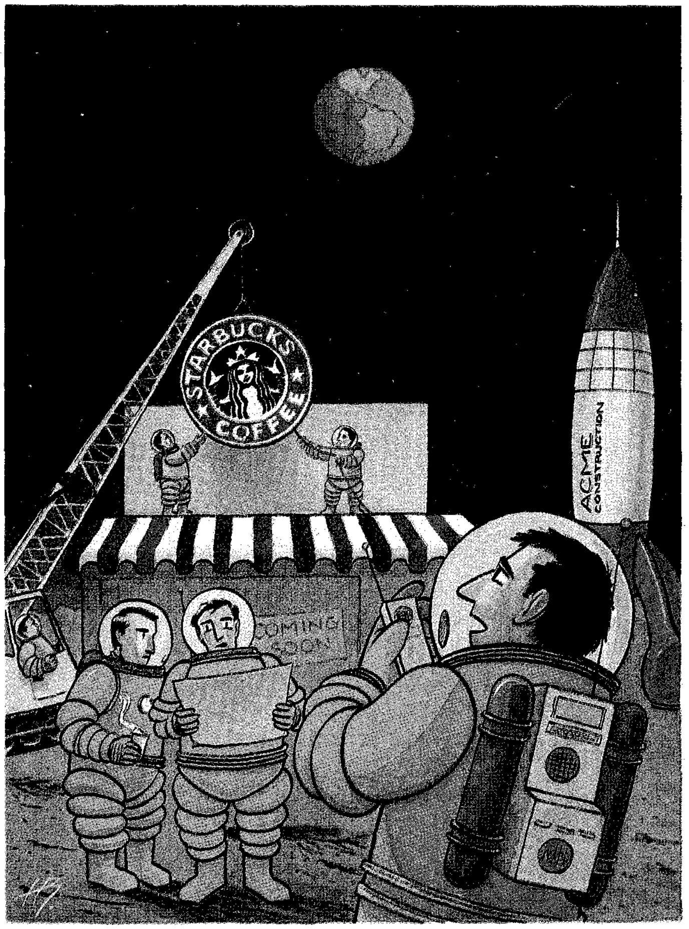
BY MICHAEL SPECTER

A COUPLE of years ago, after a long dinner in a medieval Tuscan village, I asked my father—who was visiting Italy for the first time—if he wanted a cup of coffee. His eyes went blank. "Not the thimbleful," he said, with dread, as if the waiter were about to deliver a thumbscrew instead of an espresso. "Isn't there any way to get actual coffee in this country?"

At the time, I just shook my head in haughty amazement: asking for "actual" coffee in a country where there are at least a hundred and fifty thousand coffee bars seemed a little like asking where you might possibly find a decent bagel in Brooklyn. I tried to explain that there is no ritual more central to Italian life than quick and frequent visits to the bar. (They are never called cafés; that is for the French.) Most coffee is thrown down rapidly—like a shot of whiskey—and it is rarely possible (thank God!) to walk much farther than forty yards in a major Italian city without hearing the hiss of a giant espresso machine or the brusque cries of the *baristi* who operate them. Nearly every adult in Italy drinks espresso; thirty-eight million are served each day, and that adds up to almost fourteen billion thimblefuls every year.

My favorite part of Rome is the area around the Pantheon. This is not, I confess, because the two-thousand-year-old temple is the best-preserved, and most striking, monument of the Empire. Rather, it is because the neighborhood has two famous and rival cafés—Sant' Eustachio il Caffè and Tazza d'Oro—which are among the world's finest coffee parlors.

Like most of the great bars in Italy, Sant' Eustachio is really an all-business, standup kind of place. Although it is vaguely permissible to drink a morning cappuccino while seated, espresso must be consumed on your feet. A couple of thousand people wander in every day—and each stays about five minutes. There the *baristi*—barmen who are something of a cross between short-order cooks and maître d's—can be so regal and perfunctory that they would have been perfectly suited to work the rope line at Studio 54 during its signature years. Sant' Eustachio is the only place I have ever been where you are expected to tip before you are served.



To some Italians, Starbucks represents the Attack of the Big Cup: "You like things big," one said. "We use coffee not to drink but to sip."

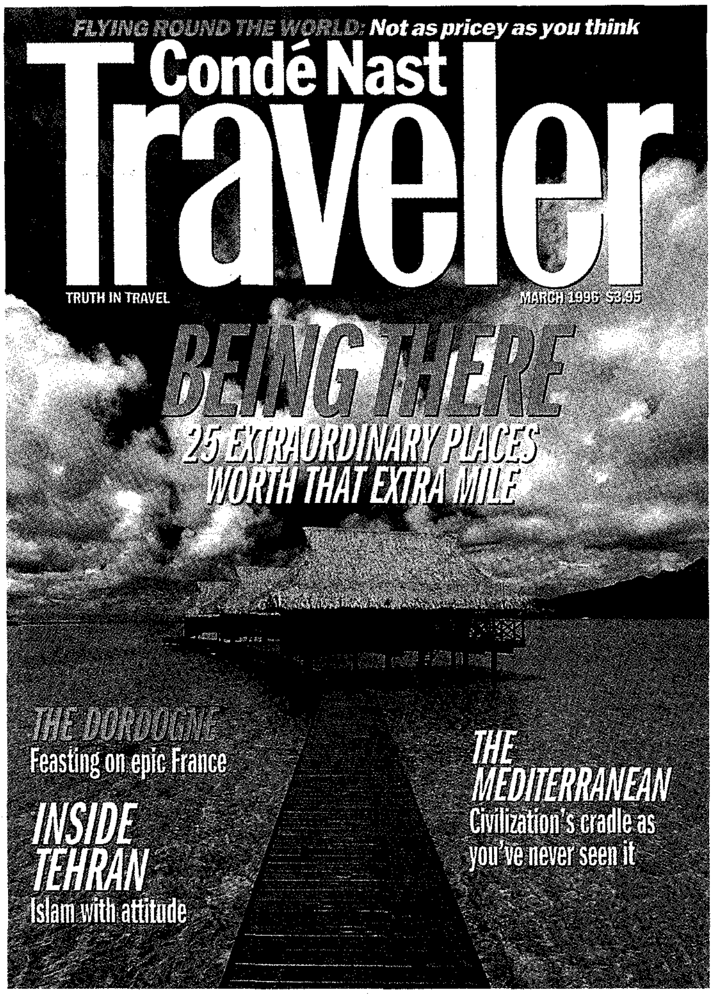
HARRY BLISS

Yet Sant' Eustachio is probably the most deeply revered bar in Rome. Its house specialty, the *gran caffè*, comes with a *crema*—the burnished foam on the surface of the espresso—so thick and rich that the director of Tazza d'Oro, the competing shop just a few hundred yards away, told me in the gravest possible tones that he was certain the coffee was roasted with additives (cream, perhaps, or chocolate). The rivalry between Tazza d'Oro and Sant' Eustachio has all the subtlety of that between Letterman and Leno—and few Romans are agnostic. "Their coffee is good, of course," Silvano Giovannucci, the director of Tazza d'Oro, said to me about his competition. "But it is not pure. If you want pure coffee you would have to come here."

In response to this calumny, Alberto Ottolini, Sant' Eustachio's owner, just laughed. He has heard it all before—many, many times. He won't reveal the secret of preparing his coffee—in the culinary world, perhaps only the formula for Coca-Cola is more closely held—but he insists that he uses only the finest arabica beans and that the coffee is roasted slowly in a wooden oven. "They have to say something over there," Ottolini told me one afternoon, in the crowded back office he has used to direct his business for nearly fifty years. "How else could they explain their inferior coffee?"

There is, of course, nothing inferior about either place, whether you want an espresso, a cappuccino, or even the wonderfully named *caffè corretto*, which is an espresso that has been "corrected" with a shot of grappa. On certain days, I find myself wandering from Tazza d'Oro to Sant' Eustachio like a caffeinated pinball. Nevertheless, I will concede that my father may have had a point at that dinner in Tuscany: something *is* missing from Italian coffee culture. Yet that something—"actual" coffee, as he put it, referring to the large mugs of steaming brown

PURE PLEASURE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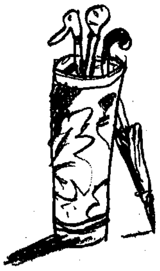
fluid which are the American birthright—may not be missing for long.

STARBUCKS—the evangelical enterprise that has nearly banished the word "swill" from the English language—hopes to have its way with Italian coffee habits, in what will be a sort of return to the promised land for the company's C.E.O. and life-style guru, Howard Schultz. In 1983, the year after Schultz started in the business, he took a revelatory trip to Italy, and there he discovered that coffee "represents the essence of life," and became convinced that Italian coffee culture could be transplanted to Seattle. At the time, there were four Starbucks, all in Seattle, selling whole beans and coffee supplies. The company has since become one of the great marketing successes of the age. After spreading through the United States and Asia almost like a religion, the company has acquired a large chain of coffee shops in Britain that will soon become part of the brand. Starbucks is now like Kleenex (or a McDonald's for the nineties): it is everywhere. A new shop opens each business day, and seven million people walk into a Starbucks every week.



With a beachhead already established in England, the time has come to contemplate the most audacious invasion of all: the company has decided, in Schultz's words, "to climb Mt. Everest." He told me when I called him in Seattle, "Going back to Italy has been my dream since the day I came home from there with the idea for the Starbucks experience. It will be our greatest challenge—a psychological one. But I am convinced we can succeed."

Schultz said that it may be at least a year before he begins his assault; his marketing team has not yet decided how many shops to open in Italy, or where to place them. But it is only a matter of time before pilgrims needing refreshment after a rigorous tour of the Sistine Chapel or a stroll down Milan's Via Montenapoleone will be able to order up a Frappuccino, an iced Americano, or a tall decaf latte. (If they want those lattes with skim milk, though, Starbucks could be in for some trouble: no respectable coffee bar in Italy would serve the stuff.)

As Schultz sees it, the sooner he can get here the better it will be for Starbucks—and for Italy. "There is an aura around America," he said. "When talking to people in the coffee business in Italy there is an underground feeling—they won't say this publicly—that they want us to come. We spur growth. We bring with us a degree of understanding of how to inspire people. And they need that right now."

They need it, Schultz believes, because there is trouble in *caffè* paradise. "On one hand, although I have tremendous respect for what has been accomplished—the heritage and romance of coffee in Italy is absolutely impossible to overstate—the coffee there is not what it once was," he said. "I go back to Italy once a year, at least. The thing that has surprised me the most is the percentage of robusta beans in high-end Italian coffee. Not everyone does it, of course, but many roasters are hiding them in the blend."

Robusta beans are to arabica what Tiparillos are to Cuban cigars. A respectable coffee roaster would never base an espresso on them (though many roasters in Italy do advocate their judicious use in even the finest blends).

"I don't want to sound arrogant, because the Italians are the best in this business," Schultz continued. "But, at a minimum, the quality and integrity of Starbucks would do well in Italy. I think we may have a chance to bring back a little of what has been lacking."

THE decline of Italian coffee comes as news to Andrea Illy. Illy is one of the princes of Italy's coffee heritage—his grandfather, Francesco, is usually given credit for inventing the precursor to the modern espresso machine, which in Italy almost puts him up there with Columbus, Galileo, and Marconi—and he takes his coffee very seriously. He was trained as a chemist, and is now chief executive officer of Illycaffè, which is often regarded as the country's top-quality roaster of espresso. Illy's grandfather founded the company in Trieste in 1933, after arriving as an officer with the Austro-Hungarian Army. (Coffee itself arrived through Venice toward the end of the sixteenth century. Pope Clement VIII was urged to ban the drink; instead he blessed it, wondering why such nectar should be left to the infidels.)

The young Illy enjoys talking about the "fifteen hundred flavors" contained within every bean, about the "volatility" of the beans, and, above all, about the ex-

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treme complexity involved in making every cup of espresso. "It's like a symphony," he told me. "There are thirteen variables in preparing every cup—the coffee, the water, the grinding, the exact temperature of the water, the force with which the water is driven through the coffee.... It is almost impossible to do it right." But Illy also has a few things to say about the new American coffee, by which he means mostly Starbucks. "Starbucks wants to come to Italy," he said, over a cup of his company's espresso at the Caffetteria Nazionale—a rare establishment where most people also sit and many eat something to accompany their espresso. "They are very bright people. They found a great territory, an empty niche.

"But really," he continued, in a tone that suggested it was time to return to earth. "This is Italy. They would have to adapt their concept if they came here. People don't drink milk here. They are mostly serving milk—and milk is *brutto*." He used the Italian word for ugly and coarse, even though he speaks perfect English.

Illy also observed that what works in America may not work in Italy. "You like things big," he told me. "Big steaks, big cars, and a big cup of coffee. We use coffee not to drink but to sip. It's like eating a chocolate—a little burst of flavor. It's subtle. There is this overroasting culture in America," he continued, voicing a fairly common complaint about Starbucks and similar specialty roasters, like Peet's. "It's by far too dark. This is why they feel the need to cover everything with milk and why they have all those syrups." Illy almost gagged. He went on to talk about the volume of beans needed for the perfect espresso (6.8 grams); about what is required to prepare a worthy *caffè macchiato* ("stained" coffee), an espresso with a tiny dollop of milk; and whether *caffè lungo* (espresso with extra water) is worth the money.

Then Illy had to catch a plane. As he stood up, he tossed out a final cautionary word. "In the world there are espresso drinkers and there are other people," he said, speaking slowly, to make sure I would get his point. "In Italy, we are espresso drinkers. Americans are the other people." ♦

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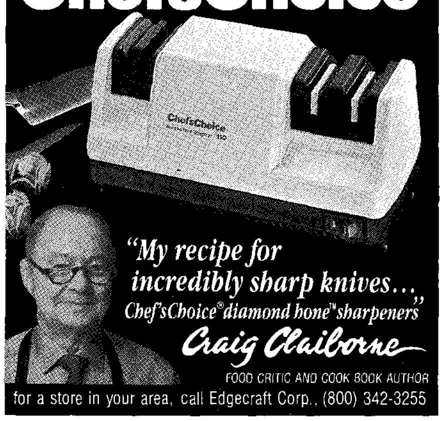

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PROFILE

THE DICTATOR

Augusto Pinochet ruled Chile ruthlessly, but he left behind a democracy. Now he wants history's blessing.

BY JON LEE ANDERSON

"I WAS only an *aspirante* dictator," General Augusto Pinochet said—a candidate for dictator. "I've always been a very studious man, not an outstanding student, but I read a lot, especially history. And history teaches you that dictators never end up well." He said this with an ironic smile.

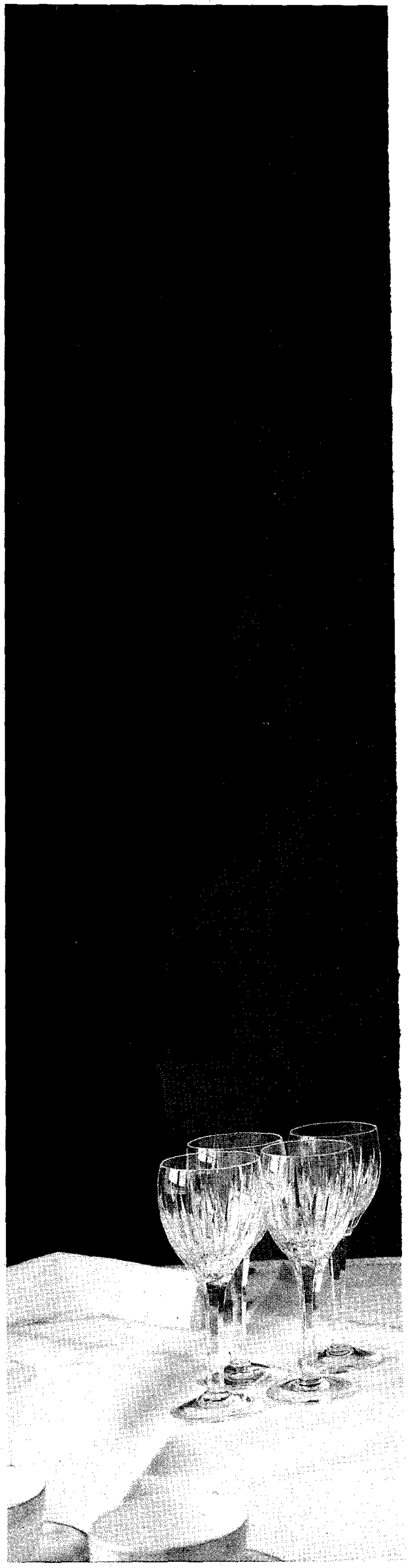
Pinochet's famously stern public countenance has been softened by the passage of time. He smiles more than he scowls now, and the sinister dark glasses that he used to wear are gone. He looks like someone's genteel grandfather. His voice is tremulous and hoarse, his carefully parted and combed hair and trim mustache are white. He has a potbelly, wears a hearing aid, and shuffles uncertainly. A conservative business suit and a tie accented discreetly with a pearl pin have replaced his military uniform.

Some things haven't changed, though. Pinochet's expression remains inscrutable. His pale-blue eyes are small and set in a wide, bullish face, and his stare is coldly foxy. The many lines around his eyes come from his smile, which appears suddenly but evaporates just as quickly. And his views don't seem to have shifted much. "Lamentably," he says, "almost everyone in the world today is a Marxist—even if they don't know it themselves. They continue to have Marxist ideas."

Pinochet is almost eighty-three years old, and justifying his actions, clarifying his place in history, is on his mind. He explained to me why he wasn't a real dictator as we sat at a large table in the dining room of a house he uses as an office, just around the corner from his former Presidential residence, in Las Condes, a tony Santiago neighborhood. Security agents with walkie-talkies stood watch on the street in front and roamed through the adjacent rooms and the garden, their weapons bulging under their jackets. Two of Pinochet's aides, one of them a colonel on active duty, sat at the table with us. They took notes and taped our conversation. The people around Pinochet don't like him to talk to journalists, but his daughter Lucía had encouraged him to see me, because she thinks that if people understand her father better he will be maligned less. She had warned me that he is brusque, and asked me not to upset him by bringing up the topic of human rights. There are several civil and criminal cases pending against him having to do with torture and murder.

Pinochet shook my hand when he walked into the room, but he didn't look me in the eye, and when he sat down he stared fixedly at his daughter. Lucía, a woman in her early fifties with her father's wide cheekbones, had told me that he was affable in private, and had a sense of humor, so I said that I was grateful that he had come, especially since I understood that he was "terrified" of journalists. That made him laugh, and then he looked at me. He wasn't terrified, he said. It was just that journalists always twisted his words.

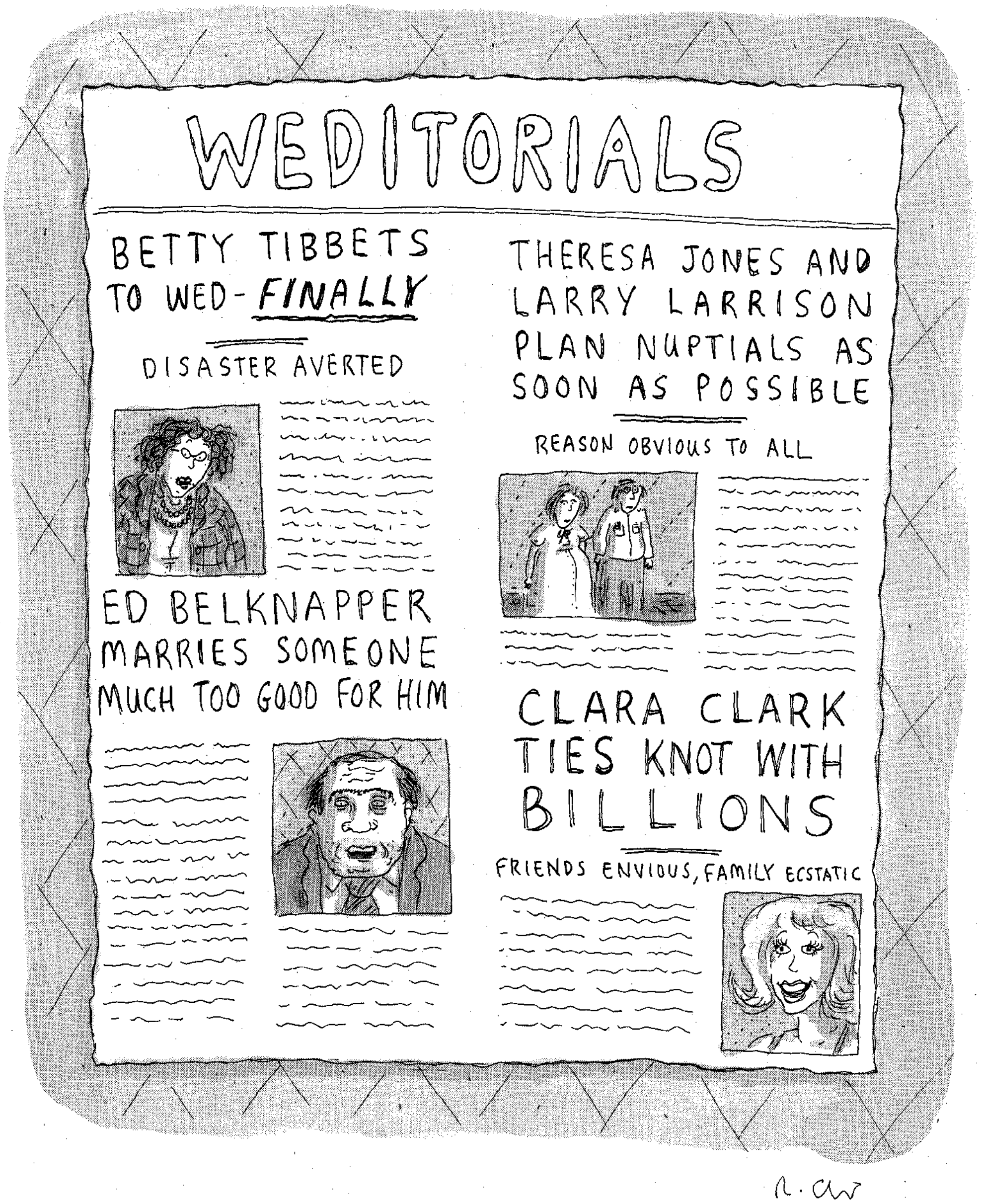
Pinochet explained that he had avoided the historical pitfall of dictators because he had never wielded absolute power. At the beginning, he and three other generals, the commanders of the branches of the armed forces, had made up a junta. "In time," he said, "I became the one who led, because the thing led by four doesn't work. You're giving orders here, the other there, the other over there—it's nothing, nothing. It doesn't advance! That's why I was chosen." Then he had tackled Chile's constitution, ushering through changes



PHOTOGRAPH BY STEVE PYKE

Augusto Pinochet in London, September 25, 1998.

MATRIX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that, among other things, legitimatized his de facto rule by making him the country's President. The old constitution had been a nuisance. "It tied one up! How can you let yourself be tied up? You have to be able to set the goalposts to be able to act! You can't have a field where you don't know where you're shooting from. So I set the goalposts."

AUGUSTO PINOCHET, all quibbling about definitions aside, is that rarest of creatures, a successful former dictator. According to Chilean opinion polls, roughly a quarter of his fellow-citizens revere him. He has few modern parallels, except perhaps Francisco Franco. (Pinochet was the only foreign head of state to attend Franco's funeral, in 1975. Ferdinand Marcos sent his wife, Imelda.) Like Franco, Pinochet is an ultra-conservative Catholic nationalist, a military officer with an unremarkable personality who suddenly rose to prominence. Both men imposed their power through violence, and used security forces to maintain it. And, over time, both transformed their societies and built strong modern economies. Pinochet knows that he is frequently compared to Franco, and he is cagey about the analogy. "There is an appropriate leader for each country," he said guardedly. "Franco was necessary for Spain."

Pinochet was born in 1915 in the port city of Valparaíso. His father was an easygoing customs agent who hoped that his son would study medicine, but Augusto wanted to become a soldier, and his mother backed his decision. He entered the military academy in 1933, at the age of seventeen. His father died when he was still a young man, but his mother lived until a few years ago, and remained a strong influence in his life until the end. In 1943, he married another strong woman, Lucía Hiriart, the nineteen-year-old daughter of a former senator and government minister. When I met her in Santiago, Lucía Hiriart de Pinochet, a gracious woman in her early seventies, confessed that, as a politician's daughter, she had found the "subjection" of her husband within the military hierarchy hard to take, and that she had urged him to strive for higher office. "When we discussed his future," Mrs. Pinochet said, "he said he'd like one day to be Commander-in-Chief. I told him he could get to be Minister of Defense."

Pinochet climbed up through the officers' ranks, and in 1971 he was made commander general of the Army's Santiago garrison. He was by then the author of several books on military geography and on geopolitics. In August, 1973, Salvador Allende, who had become President three years earlier, appointed him Commander-in-Chief of the Chilean Army. Mrs. Pinochet says she couldn't believe it when her husband told her the news; she thought he was joking. Then, less than three weeks later, the Army staged a coup and Allende killed himself during the attack on La Moneda, the Presidential palace. Her husband would rule Chile, and she would become the First Lady. "My husband had taught me that in a normal career he'd get to be colonel. Anything above would be good fortune and a bit of luck. He became a general because of politics. They call me messianic for saying so, but I believe it was divine Providence that he got to be President."

He stayed in power for seventeen years. Upward of three thousand people were killed or "disappeared" while he was in office, and tens of thousands more were imprisoned or fled into exile. The new constitution, which was passed in 1980, gave Pinochet an eight-year term as President, but he was so confident of his popularity that in 1988 he held a referendum proposing that his tenure be extended for another eight years. To his surprise he lost, and stepped down from office two years later. A civilian, democratic government was reestablished, and a Christian Democrat was elected President. Next year is an election year, and the man widely tipped as the winner, Ricardo Lagos, is a former Allende aide and a Socialist.

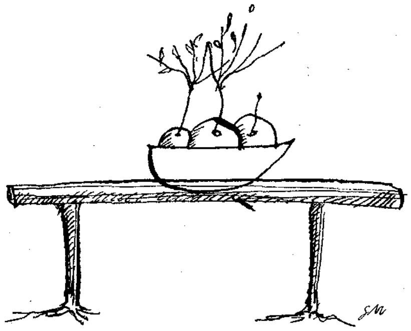
The country that the new democratic leaders inherited is prosperous, forward-looking. Santiago, the capital city—where one in every three Chileans now live—sprawls in a fertile bowl of land beneath the Andean cordillera, its air amber-colored with smog, the surrounding snowcapped mountains no longer visible most days. Blue- and black-tinted glass-and-marble office blocks are displacing the villas that used to make up the city's poshest neighborhoods; vineyards are being plowed up to make way for shopping malls and American-style subdivisions. At the intersections of the traffic-clogged roads, huge billboards advertise credit cards, cell phones, and laptop computers. Santiago is a Latin-American beachhead of the thrusting, free-market ethos that transforms urban areas everywhere into mosaics of industrial parks, freeways, office complexes, and suburban sprawl. In this new Chile, the modern, fortress-like American Embassy enjoys a prominent position in a walled compound situated between the Mapocho River—an odoriferous gray flow of water that bisects Santiago—and a shining outcrop of office blocks and hotels known locally as Sanhattan.

"All of this is new. All of it! What was here before . . . was chalets, bungalows. It was beautiful, but it was . . . something different," General Julio Canessa says. "And all of this was done by the *horrible* Pinochet." Canessa is being theatrically sarcastic. He believes that Pinochet suffers from the same unfair criticism that taints Franco's place in history. "If it hadn't been for Franco," Canessa says, "Spain would still be part of Africa."

Chile's vaunted economic miracle was brought about by the so-called Chicago Boys, a group of Chilean disciples of the American economist Milton Friedman, who were given free reign to put their theories into practice in the mid-seventies. They encouraged generous incentives for foreign investors and the privatization of businesses that the Marxist Allende had nationalized. This resulted in an average annual economic growth rate of seven per cent for the past fourteen years, a rate three times the over-all Latin-American average. A recent United Nations study of life expectancy, salaries, access to health services, and educational standards rated Chile higher than any other Latin-American country.

This performance brought Augusto Pinochet many admirers among conservatives, including Margaret Thatcher, who sent an aide to Chile to spend six months studying Pinochet's economic reforms before she embarked on her own in Britain. During his annual trips to London, Pinochet says, he always sends Thatcher flowers and a box of chocolates, and whenever possible they meet for tea. Another admirer is the Russian Presidential aspirant Aleksandr Lebed. Lucía Pinochet showed me a fax she'd just received from an organization in Moscow calling itself Pinochet for Russia. Its members were soliciting books and other materials for their Pinochet archive. Lucía has privately published a large coffee-table book of photographs of her father. It includes a picture of the General on a visit to Madame Tussaud's wax museum, in London. He is standing in front of the figure of Lenin, wagging his finger at the founder of the Soviet Union in what appears to be a gesture of gleeful admonishment. When I asked Pinochet what it was he had "told" Lenin, he cackled, "I told him, 'You were wrong, sir! You were wrong.' "

LUCÍA PINOCHET, who is the closest to her father of his five children, gave me a version of recent history that I was to hear many times from the Chileans who call themselves Pinochetistas. She explained that the coup against Allende had been necessary because the country was being turned into "another Cuba." If the armed forces had not stepped in, a bloody civil war would have been inevitable. But she fears that young Chileans have taken for granted the stability and prosperity her father brought to their country. "They prefer to admire Fidel Castro and Che Guevara," she said sadly. "I've learned that you can't transfer history's lessons from one generation to another."



Pinochet's strongest support comes from Chilean businessmen and the armed forces. The Chilean Army has a historical museum at the military academy in Santiago, in a gray-green cement building fronted by tall, square colonnades. In one room of the museum there is an exhibit of a small portion of Pinochet's collection of Napoleonica: great gilt-lettered leatherbound volumes about Napoleon in Spanish and French; bronze busts; and, in pride of place, a framed parchment signed by Napoleon himself. The weathered wooden desk at which the junta was sworn in, on September 11, 1973, after Allende shot himself (with a rifle that had been given to him by Fidel Castro), stands in the gallery outside the Napoleonica room. Nearby is a plaque commemorating the swearing-in, which took place in the lobby below, and set side by side on a damask cloth are bronze life masks of Pinochet and the three other generals who formed the junta. In a second room, more than a thousand silver and gold medals and decorations that were bestowed upon Pinochet during his long career are exhibited behind glass. There are embossed medals from Chiang Kai-shek, King Juan Carlos of Spain, and General Alfredo Stroessner of Paraguay, and a plaque from the World Anti-Communist League.

Curiously, Pinochet's popularity extends to the People's Republic of China, which he has visited twice. China is a major client for Chile's copper exports, and Pinochet has nurtured his relationship with Beijing. "They are very fond of me," he says. "Because I saw that Chinese Communism was *patriotic* Communism, not the Communism of Mao. I opened up the doors to Chinese commerce, letting them hold an exposition here, in which they brought everything they had—and they sold everything they brought." On both his trips to China, Pinochet says, the Chinese treated him with great respect. "The first time they put me in a house, but the last time it was a palace. And I became good friends with General Chen, a warrior who fought in Korea, in Vietnam, and who doesn't like the Americans very much." Pinochet shot me a sidelong glance and grinned.

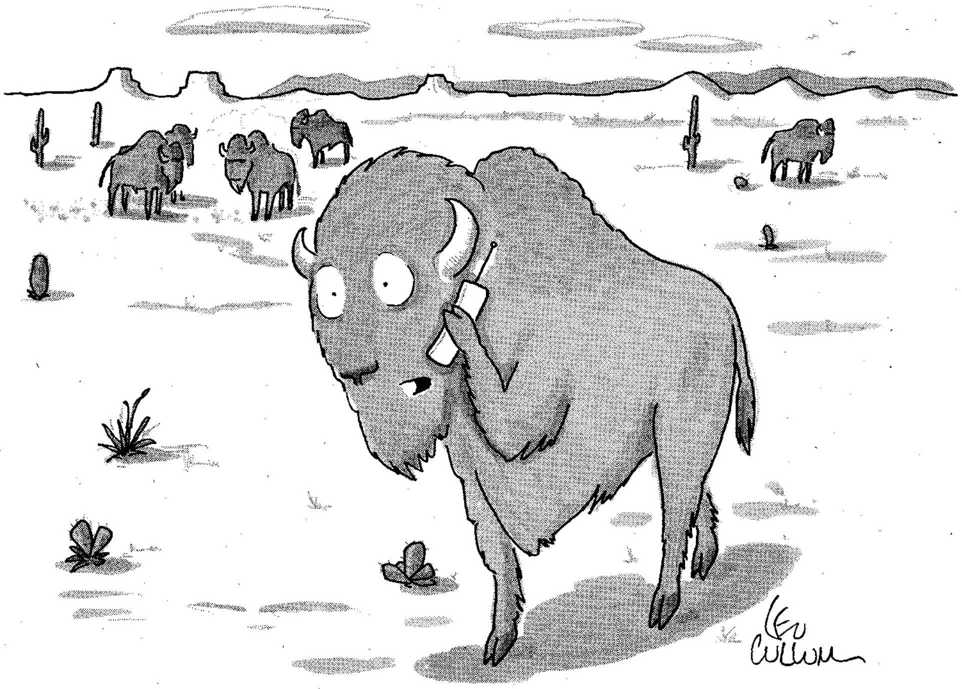
The most ambitious program to preserve Pinochet's legacy is sponsored by the Augusto Pinochet Foundation, which operates out of a discreet Japanese-style house in Las Condes. The foundation was a surprise birthday gift to Pinochet from a group of former aides, friends, and business leaders. It provides him with a small full-time staff and an office containing a duplicate of his desk in the Presidential palace. The foundation sponsors conferences and holds fund-raisers to provide scholarships for the children of armed-forces personnel. At an event in late August, attended by a hundred or so students from a private university established by Pinochet for military offspring, the director of the foundation, Luis Cortes Villa, a retired general, gave an impassioned pep talk to his young audience. He spoke of the "great sacrifices" that had been made by their mothers and fathers so that the new, modern Chile could be born. Then, pointing to a huge painting of Pinochet in full-dress regalia which dominated a corner of the room, Cortes Villa sang out, in a voice high with feeling, "There he is. He doesn't walk as he once did, but his ideas are still there, his deeds are there, and we are going to keep on, so that his ideals survive!"

TWO hours by car from Santiago, on the Pacific coast, Pablo Neruda's house, Isla Negra, overlooks a wild, rocky cove. It was here, in mid-September, 1973, as he lay terminally ill with cancer, that the poet was told the news of the coup and of his friend Allende's death in the attack on La Moneda. Neruda made plans to flee the country, but his condition worsened suddenly and, on September 23rd, he died. Whether or not Neruda's death was hastened by a broken heart, the poet's demise became emblematic of the end of intellectual and political freedoms in Chile. As officials of Allende's government and anyone else suspected of leftist political affiliations were hunted down, tortured, and executed, the death of Neruda hung in the air like a curse.

For many years afterward, Isla Negra remained shuttered and guarded by soldiers, who prevented anyone from approaching it. Now it is open to the public, and no soldiers are in sight. The rambling, single-story beach house is a memorial to Neruda's many passions: nineteenth-century carved wooden ship's figureheads, scrimshaw, decorative Belle Époque bottles of colored glass, and primitive masks, and his collection of mounted insects, hummingbirds, and seashells. A half mile away, two mustard-yellow apartment towers, monumental in their concrete ugliness, rise over the hills of the shoreline. The developers wanted to build the apartment blocks even closer to Isla Negra, I was told, but lost the battle after strenuous lobbying efforts by the Neruda Foundation. Isla Negra and the tower blocks coexist in an uneasy stalemate.

In Chile, historical memory is contentious, tarnished, and unstable in its resolution. There is no national consensus about what is valuable and worth keeping about the past and what isn't. Two competing versions of Chile's history exist, unreconciled. I had dinner at the elegant Sheraton Hotel in Santiago with a close friend of the Pinochet family. She was a slender, attractive widow of about fifty, whose late husband had been a military officer. When I asked her if he had participated in the coup, she replied emphatically, "Oh yes! He was very active. He even dealt with *the prisoners.*" She grimaced theatrically. I realized that what she meant was that he had been involved in the roundup of leftist suspects and their subsequent torture and execution. I tried to get her to be more specific. "You're talking about *los fusilamientos*—the firing squads?" I asked tentatively. She nodded. "But my husband liked to do things *correctamente*, and he always secured the help of lawyers." She was referring to the lawyers who served as prosecutors in the martial-law "war tribunals" set up to try the thousands of people detained following the coup. Even so, I ventured, that kind of duty must have been difficult for him. She nodded, but explained that the area they lived in had been a stronghold of leftist terrorists. "It was a war," she said. "It was either *you* or *them.*"

Salvador Allende's daughter, Isabel (not the novelist, who is her second cousin), bridles at the term "excesses," which is the euphemism preferred by Pinochetistas when ac-

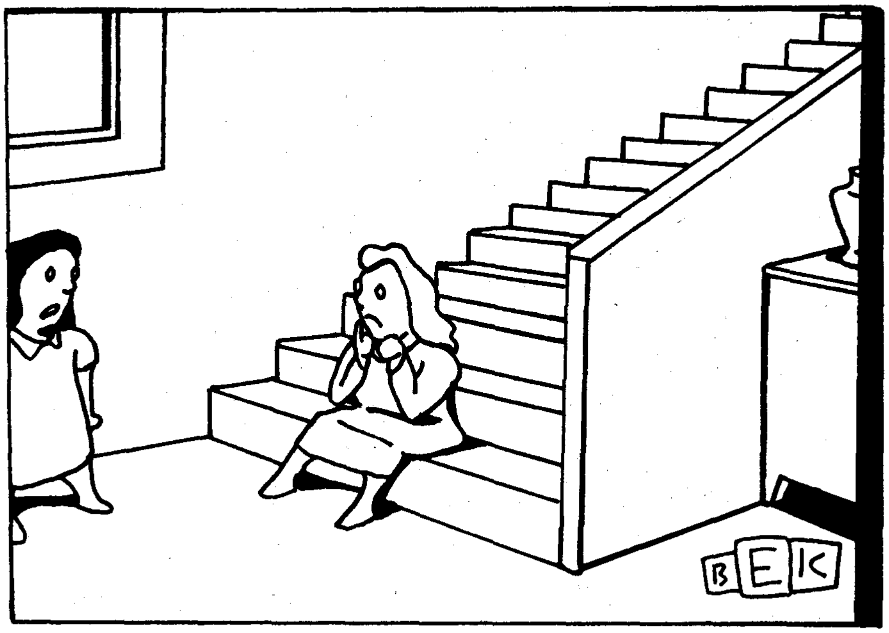


"I love the convenience, but the roaming charges are killing me."

knowledging that any abuses occurred during the General's tenure. "There was *slaughter*, there was state terrorism!" Allende says. "Many people were murdered, in cold blood, their throats slit, burned to death. These weren't 'excesses,' these were murders that were planned, premeditated, coördinated by the intelligence agencies and state agencies."

The chaotic, three-year attempt by Salvador Allende to take Chile on the "road to socialism" was opposed by a large portion of the Chilean population. Allende was elected with only a third of the vote, but after he took office he moved quickly, nationalizing the copper mines and other industries, conducting large-scale land reform, and increasing government spending on social-welfare programs. He alienated the armed forces, the private sector, and traditional political parties, including the Christian Democrats. As some members of his Popular Unity coalition government pushed for more radical changes, right-wing militants responded with bombings and killings, and leftists prepared for a civil war. When the coup finally came, not many Chileans were surprised, and many middle-class citizens openly applauded it, although they could not have known that Chile would soon become a proving ground for the grisly anti-Communist dirty wars that were waged in Latin America during the seventies and eighties. If Radovan Karadzic can be given authorship of "ethnic cleansing," then Augusto Pinochet can probably be credited with adding *los desaparecidos*—"the disappeared"—to the modern lexicon.

The world saw it all begin on television. First, the daylight bombing, from the air, by British-made Hawker Hunter fighters, of La Moneda, with President Allende still inside. Then came the roundup of thousands of people, who were herded at gunpoint into the huge National Stadium, where they were detained for weeks. Black-hooded informers walked in front of people huddled in the bleachers, pointing out suspected subversives to uniformed officers. Out of sight, in the warren of cubicles of the sports facility, people were tortured and murdered. Firing squads executed hundreds at the stadium and at other places around the country. The musician Víctor Jara was one of the victims, shot to death, his hands broken. People were buried in mine shafts, in unmarked graves, in mass graves yet to be found. A former air-force intelligence agent admitted that bodies were dumped from helicopters over the Pacific Ocean, their bellies slit open so they would sink. Detention camps were set up the length and breadth of Chile. Agents of DINA, the National Directorate of Intelligence, struck against anyone they suspected of being an enemy of the new Chile. The killing became more selective and the techniques of execution were varied as time went on. Allende's former Foreign Secretary, Orlando Letelier, and his American secretary, Ronnie Moffit, were blown up in Washington, D.C., by a car bomb in 1976. Assassinations continued well into the late nineteen-eighties. In 1985, three Communist Party members were kidnapped and murdered. Their throats were slit, and their bodies were dumped by the roadside.



"The problems will remain the same, but apparently they get wordier and wordier."

Not far from Allende's tomb in the national cemetery in Santiago is a huge wall of white marble inscribed with the names, the ages—ranging from thirteen to almost eighty—and the dates of death or disappearance of the regime's victims. On either side, stretching away from the great wall of names like wings, are two lower walls, with niches where the bodies are to be placed when they are discovered. Only a few niches are occupied.

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OVER drinks in her garden, an aristocratic Chilean woman who spends much of her time in Europe and who gives orders to her Alsatian guard dogs in French, said to me, "Chileans are isolated and insular, and, like the Germans, they are incapable of initiative; they need to be told what to do. That is why Pinochet was so good for them." This analysis was echoed by several other Chileans I met, all of whom cited Chile's geographical isolation and its hybrid mixture of imported nationalities as key factors in Pinochet's popularity.

Chile is a narrow, twenty-five-hundred-mile long sliver of a country, cut off from Argentina and Bolivia by the Andes, from Peru by its long northern desert, and bounded on the west by the Pacific Ocean, with only Antarctica to the south. The population ranges from the indigenous Mapuche and Aymara Indian minorities to the mestizo majority—the mixed-blood descendants of the Spanish conquerors—with sizable numbers of the descendants of émigrés from Great Britain, Germany, Serbia, and Croatia in between. All of them have left a mark. Pinochet told me that England is his favorite country—"the ideal place to live"—because of its civility and moderation, its respect for rules. As an example, he pointed to the impeccable driving habits of the British, compared with the "rude" road behavior of his countrymen. Chileans will tell you with pride that they are often called the English of South America.

Chile's nineteenth-century independence hero and its first President, officially the *director supremo*, was the half-Irish Bernardo O'Higgins, a cruel and oppressive man whose reputation has undergone a posthumous resurrection. A few years ago, General Pinochet had O'Higgins' remains moved from the military academy to a site opposite the Presidential palace, where soldiers guard an eternal flame that marks a spot called the Altar of the Fatherland. Some of the soldiers standing watch wear uniforms that are disturbingly similar to those worn by the Nazis. Others look distinctively and unabashedly Prussian: gray tunics with short, stiff collars, spiked helmets, and black leather boots. Between the eighteen-eighties and the nineteen-thirties, Chile's Army was trained by Prussian officers.

A few blocks beyond La Moneda a grid of pedestrian walkways, *peatonales*, spreads out for several blocks. One day, at an intersection there, I found a trio of Mapuche Indians—two women and a man with long glossy black braids and necklets of old silver coins—playing native instruments under a banner protesting the planned construction of a hydroelectric dam in their homeland. The banner protested "an affront to the millennium-old Mapuche culture." Gathered around the Indians in a silent, curious knot were a dozen or so conservatively dressed, white-skinned citizens. To them, clearly, the Mapuches were as exotically foreign as if they had been Tibetans.

Chilean society is unusually insular and socially conservative. Nearly nine years after the country returned to democracy, divorce and abortion are still illegal, homosexuals can be criminally prosecuted, and an official censorship board screens, and occasionally bans, movies. There is much talk of "citizens' insecurity," the common euphemism for Santiago's crime rate, which, according to Pinochetistas, has increased to troubling levels since the General stepped down.

Pinochet's supporters, of course, have even worse things to say about the government that he replaced in 1973. One of the more common stories—delivered with expressions of shocked repugnance—is that Allende was drunk at the time he died in La Moneda: that an autopsy found his body to be "full of alcohol." An octogenarian lawyer and former judge, Alfredo del Valle, told me, "Allende was a man without any moral calibre." When I asked him what he meant, he paused, and then confided that among his friends was an Army officer who, after the coup, led a search of Allende's home and became "physically sick" by what he saw. "What was there?" I asked. The old lawyer shook his head. "Pornography," he replied in a disgusted whisper. "Mountains of it—of the *worst* kind."

This kind of vilification is, understandably, a source of bitterness to Isabel Allende. She and a sister were part of a small group who stayed at the President's side in La Moneda on the day of the coup, until he ordered them to leave. A trim woman with short dark hair, Allende received me in the living room of her late father's home, where her mother, Hortensia, still lives. In an uncanny echo of the concerns of Lucía Pinochet, Allende explained that she had established a Salvador Allende Foundation to "teach the youth of today about my father's ideals of social justice" and to counteract the misinformation about him propagated during the Pinochet years.

As the twenty-fifth anniversary of the coup drew near this September, a flood of new publications about the period appeared in bookstores. The one that caused the greatest sensation, and became an instant best-seller, was "Secret Interference," by the Chilean journalist Patricia Verdugo. It includes an annotated transcript of secretly recorded radio conversations between Pinochet and his fellow-officers during the attack on La Moneda. Their voices are clearly audible on a CD that accompanies the book. At one point, Pinochet's shrill voice can be heard as he speaks to Vice-Admiral Patricio Carvajal, who has just received a message that Allende wants to negotiate.

Pinochet: Unconditional surrender! No negotiation! Unconditional surrender!

Carvajal: Good, understood. Unconditional surrender and he's taken prisoner, the offer is nothing more than to respect his life, shall we say.

Pinochet: His life and . . . his physical integrity, and he'll be immediately dispatched to another place.

Carvajal: Understood. Now . . . in other words, the offer to take him out of the country is still maintained.

Pinochet: The offer to take him out of the country is maintained . . . but the plane falls, old boy, when it's in flight. (Carvajal laughs.)

A few hours later, after the negotiations have broken down and La Moneda is engulfed in flames, Carvajal relays word to Pinochet that Allende has just been found dead in his office. Worried about the consequences of an Allende funeral, Pinochet is heard debating what to do with the body, and suggests "sticking it in a coffin and putting it on a plane with the family and sending it to Cuba," or else—the option eventually taken—"burying it secretly" in Chile. At one point, Pinochet wisecracks, "Boy, even dying this guy caused problems!"

Among Pinochetistas, it is an article of faith that Pinochet's rise to power was, if not an act of God, then at least one of selfless duty, wholly engineered by Chile's patriotic men in arms. The active American role in aiding and abetting Allende's downfall has been airbrushed out of their version of history. But in fact, even before Allende took office, in 1970, the Nixon White House authorized a secret C.I.A. destabilization campaign against him. It included funnelling money and arms to right-wing paramilitary groups and plotters within the Chilean armed forces, press disinformation, and unspecified "black operations." The plan, according to declassified United States government documents, was to make Chile ungovernable under Allende, provoke social chaos, and bring about a military coup. "Make the economy scream," reads a handwritten memo by Richard Helms, the director of the C.I.A., during a September 15, 1970, meeting with Nixon, Henry Kissinger, and John Mitchell in the White House. A

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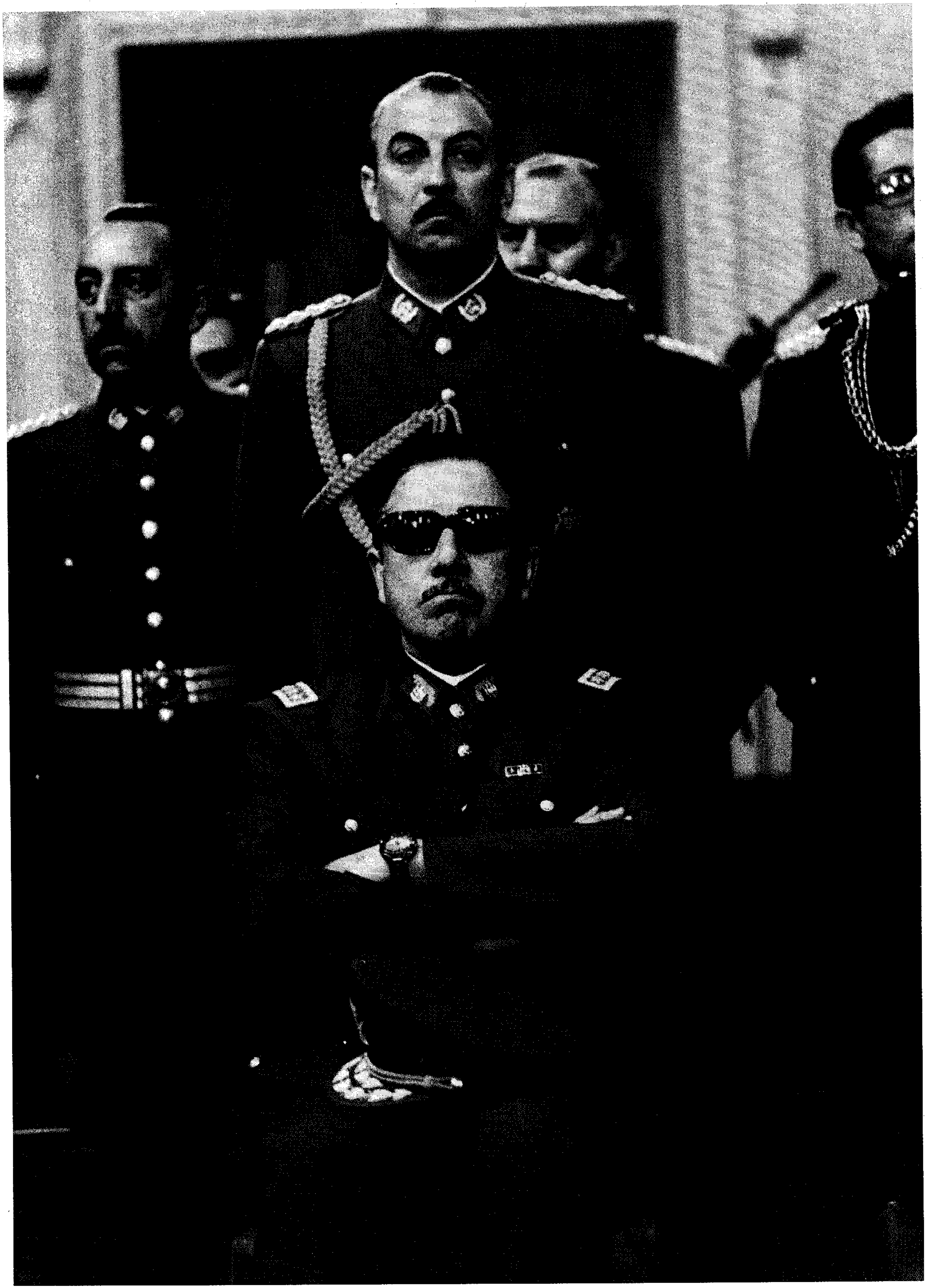
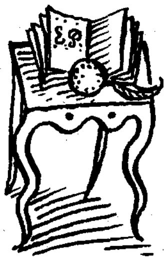


Pinochet (seated) on Allende's 1973 ouster: "The offer to take him out of the country is maintained, but the plane falls when it's in flight."

month later, a C.I.A. cable outlined the objectives clearly to the station chief in Santiago: "It is firm and continuing policy that Allende be overthrown by a coup. . . . We are to continue to generate maximum pressure toward this end utilizing every appropriate resource. It is imperative that these actions be implemented clandestinely and securely so that United States Government and American hand be well hidden."



Despite the Americans' desire for early results, the Chilean military took its time, but after it finally acted, in 1973, it methodically began "inoculating" Chile against Communism. The extremity of the measures that were employed led the U.S. to suspend military aid to Chile in 1976, however, and relations soured further after the murders of Orlando Letelier and Ronnie Moffit were linked directly to the chief of Chile's intelligence agency. Pinochet was an embarrassment, and from the Carter Administration onward official U.S. policy was to promote Chile's "democratization," by encouraging Pinochet to soften up and permit elections. He did not take kindly to the lectures, and his gruff posturings led one Reagan emissary, Assistant Secretary of State Langhorne Motley, to tell the New York *Times* that Pinochet was the "toughest nut I've ever seen. He makes Somoza and the rest of those guys look like a bunch of patsies."

IN March of this year, Pinochet, dressed in a dove-gray military uniform with red and black accents and gold braid, finally stepped down as Commander-in-Chief of the Chilean Army, a post he had retained after giving up the Presidency, in 1990. At an open-air military ceremony held in his honor, the band played "Lili Marlene," his favorite song, and he shouted out "Mission accomplished!" and then tearfully handed over his ceremonial sword of office to his successor. The very next day, Pinochet arrived in a business suit at the Congress building in Valparaíso, to be sworn in as senator for life. Thousands of protesters who had gathered in the streets outside were quelled by police armed with tear gas, water cannons, and batons. He was greeted inside the Senate chamber by his supporters and by members of the opposition, some of whom were wearing black armbands and holding up photographs of those who had died or disappeared during the previous twenty-five years. He was in the uncomfortable position of being among his enemies, including Juan Pablo Letelier, the son of Orlando Letelier, and Isabel Allende, both of whom are members of Congress. Fistfights had to be broken up before the swearing-in could proceed, and, despite the resumption of business as usual, the atmosphere inside Chile's Senate has been close to surreal ever since.

Pinochet's presence in the Senate (which is in a building he had constructed on the spot where his childhood home once stood) is a reminder that Chile's democracy is a "tutored" one—tutored by Pinochet. In many ways, the Chilean dilemma is symptomatic of the difficulties confronted by many societies that have emerged from authoritarian rule in the last decade or so. With few exceptions, the usual quid pro quo for the peaceful restoration of civilian rule has been a general amnesty for crimes committed by the ancien régime. But what happens when the ruling military dictator "permits" a return to democracy and, before leaving power, rigs the laws so as to guarantee himself, and the armed forces, an ongoing role in domestic politics?

Thanks to the constitution of 1980, which his regime ushered into law, Pinochet, as a former President, was automatically granted the post of senator for life. He joined nine other constitutionally mandated "designated" senators, including several of his closest former military aides—men like General Canessa—in the forty-eight-member chamber. Together with the elected senators of the two pro-Pinochet right-wing parties, these designated senators form a majority. They have already demonstrated their clout, thwarting three efforts to reform the constitution, which, among other things, gives the military control over its own budget, as well as control over the powerful National Security Council. When Pinochet stepped down as Commander-in-Chief, he named his own successor.

A few weeks after the swearing-in, the current President, Eduardo Frei, responded to widespread public outrage over Pinochet's new lease on life by going on television to float the notion of a national plebiscite on the constitution. But his speech was most likely a face-saving gesture, since a plebiscite to reform the constitution would require that the constitution itself first be amended in Congress, and that, in turn, would require a majority vote in the Senate. Pinochet has constructed a very clever shelter for himself and his friends.

Isabel Allende acknowledges Pinochet's legal right to be in the Senate, but, she says, "to see Pinochet dressed in civilian clothes, with the title of senator for life, he who was a dictator, the person responsible for a government which exercised state terrorism—is very shocking for anyone with a democratic conscience."

PINOCHET'S most substantial claim to being a good leader is that he oversaw the Chilean economic miracle. With Congress closed down, and political parties and union activity outlawed, there were no obstacles to the implementation of Milton Friedman's program of a free-market "shock treatment." Drastic cuts were made in public spending to cure a hyperinflating economy. Banks were deregulated, interest rates freed, and import tariffs slashed; state-owned enterprises were sold off. In response, the junta obtained lenient refinancing for Chile's foreign debt and munificent loans from the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank, and other financial institutions.

Pinochet made sure that the armed forces received some of the benefits of the flourishing economy. By law, the military receives ten per cent of the profits from the copper industry, Chile's main export earner, which is still under state control. The nationalization of copper was one Allende measure that *was* popular across the political spectrum. Copper had been controlled by United States mining interests for decades and was a contentious national-sovereignty issue.

Aside from one major financial crisis in the early eighties, caused by bad investments and overspending, Chile's economy has grown rapidly. Along with the new foreign investments came credit cards and a robust stock market. Private, employment-linked schemes began to replace state-provided social-security and health-insurance programs; new private schools and private universities were built. Chile today has the largest middle class in Latin America, estimated at sixty per cent of its population; a ninety-five-per-cent literacy rate; low infant mortality; an average life expectancy of seventy-four years; and declining poverty levels.

There are three Chilean billionaires on the *Forbes* rich list, but, because wages for the poor have not risen along with Chile's economic growth, the country has one of the worst ratios of income disparity in Latin America—the wealthiest twenty per cent of Chileans earn fourteen times as much as the poorest—and the gap appears to be widening. For the twenty-five per cent of Chileans still living below the official poverty line, the trickle-down benefits of the free-market miracle remain elusive. I visited a slum built along an irrigation canal on Santiago's dusty outskirts, the result of an organized land "invasion" by poor migrants from rural central Chile. The houses were rudimentary wooden shacks, although they had free electricity, robbed from the power lines that stretched above them, and the dirt streets were laid out in an orderly grid. There was no running water or proper sanitation. Behind each shanty stood a rough latrine made of scrap wood or metal, and some, but not all, had large blue plastic *bidones*, containers filled with water purchased from the drivers of roving trucks. A dirt lane led out to the main road and people walked along it, or else paid for rides in horse-drawn jitneys.

The prevailing perception among upper- and middle-class Chileans is that the poor, *el pueblo*, are Communists—"Allende's people." When Pinochetistas talk about the "eight per cent" of Chileans who still vote for the Communist Party, they point an accusing finger toward Santiago's slums. One day, driving with an affluent Chilean woman on the capital's outskirts—on an excursion that was supposed to lead us to a wine-growing friend's country house—I took a wrong turn, and we found ourselves in an unkempt area of low-income housing and hardscrabble *cayampas*. As we got deeper into the *población*, my passenger became very nervous. Concealing her Louis Vuitton handbag beneath her legs and making sure the car doors were locked and the windows up, she exclaimed, "We should turn around! This is where all the thieves and muggers, the murderers, rapists, and *terroristas* come from!"

A LARGE white rabbit hopped around the lush green lawn of Marco Antonio Pinochet's back yard, which is separated by a wall from his father's home on a gated street in the upper-middle-class suburb of La Dehesa. Periodically, his wife ran out, trying to catch the rabbit and put it back in its hutch. In keeping with family tradition, Pinochet's youngest son is named after a Roman ruler (his elder brother is Augusto, Jr.). He is not interested in government, however, and after a long stint in the United States, learning how to fly helicopters and airplanes, he has become a businessman. When I visited him, on a Saturday afternoon, he and his wife, and some friends—a wealthy Chilean and his wife, Miss Chile of 1980—were relaxing on the Pinochets' back porch. Their children had been taken off by their nannies to see a movie.

The men discussed whether or not they would bet on a racing tip given to them by a horse trainer. Marco Antonio's friend, who had recently returned from a visit to Cambodia, told a story about receiving, as a gift, a carved stone frieze plundered from Angkor Wat. Not daring to risk smuggling it out of the country, he had left it behind to be shipped to him. But now he feared that the antiquity would never arrive. The conversation then turned to official corruption in Asia. Marco Antonio noted that many Latin-American governments were nearly as corrupt as those in Asia. "What Latin America needs is authoritarian democracies," he said. "Corrupt democracies are no good." He lapsed into thought for a moment, and

"Perhaps that peculiar odor is autumn."

then added, "But corrupt dictatorships are no good, either."

Financial corruption is not high on the list of things that Pinochet is accused of, but a congressional panel—determined to find him criminally liable for *something*—has demanded a sworn accounting of his personal assets. Although his pre-1973 tax returns reflected the typically modest earnings of a Chilean military officer, Pinochet is now believed to own at least five properties around Chile, worth several million dollars. The congressmen want to know how, and with what funds, he obtained them.

In the past, accusations of fiscal impropriety have prompted strong reactions from Pinochet, who prides himself on being a man of simple tastes, and impeccably honest. When a public outcry greeted his use of state funds to build a huge new Presidential mansion in the exclusive hilltop suburb of Lo Curro, Pinochet was mortified, and never took up residence there. Today, the mansion serves as a clubhouse for senior military officers.

In 1984, a Christian Democratic senator, Jorge Lavandero, was nearly beaten to death in the streets of Santiago by thugs when he attempted to pursue a legal inquiry into the low price Pinochet had paid for some government-owned land for a private weekend retreat in the mountains outside Santiago. Lavandero spent six months in the hospital and permanently lost the hearing in his left ear. Pinochet kept the land and went ahead and built his retreat, which is called Melocotón. I visited Melocotón with Lucía Pinochet. Set in a grove of fruit trees in a canyon above the Maipo River, it is a simply built Bavarian-style chalet of cement, wood, and corrugated tin, with small adjoining apartments for the Pinochet children; a swimming pool; and a gymnasium and library for the General. Whatever methods Pinochet used to buy it, it seemed disappointingly modest.

Other financial dealings in the Pinochet family appear to be more egregious. When a scandal erupted in 1990 over the revelation that Pinochet's elder son, Augusto, Jr., had been paid nearly three million dollars by the Army after it bought a gun factory he owned a small percentage of, Pinochet sent troops into the streets of Santiago to express his displeasure. The investigation was quashed, but when it was reopened three years later he sent out the troops again.

Although Pinochet no longer has the same prerogatives for the use of force to defend his integrity, he is Commander Emeritus for Life of the Army and has at his disposal a contingent of military bodyguards, armored Mercedes-Benzes, and an ambulance, which accompanies him everywhere. These security perks have gone unquestioned, because, as one of his aides, Fernando Martínez, told me, "The General has a great many enemies." In 1986, a Marxist guerrilla group nearly succeeded in killing him, in a spectacular ambush as he returned from a weekend at Melocotón. Pinochet survived more or less unscathed, but five of his bodyguards died. Four leftists in Santiago were kidnapped and murdered in apparent reprisal.

PINOCHET had something of a public-relations triumph late in August this year, when he managed to look like a statesman by negotiating a deal in Congress. Several senators were attempting to abolish the national holiday of September 11th, which the Army has celebrated every year since 1973 to commemorate the successful coup. The day has traditionally been marred by violence, and in August the legislature was deadlocked on the issue. "I could see we were going to end in a tie again," Pinochet recalled when we met. "A path had to be found to break the impasse. We military men always think like that—how to break the impasse. And there was a way out."

The way out, as he told it, was to propose a compromise with the president of the Senate, Andrés Zaldívar, a Christian Democrat he had once sent into exile. If Zaldívar could muster support on his side, Pinochet would prevail upon the opposition to cast down the eleventh after this year, as long as it was replaced by a new holiday, a Day of National Unity, to be held on the first Monday of every September. After some haggling, Zaldívar agreed; both men went to work on their fellow-politicians, and a few hours later the deal was struck. Ignoring parliamentary protocols, Pinochet

"When 'Hey Diddle Diddle' came along, we jumped at the chance to work together."

walked across the Senate floor, ascended the raised stage where Zaldívar sits, and, after giving him a manly *abrazo,* sat down in the chair next to him. To the exasperation of his opponents, Pinochet not only had stolen their initiative but had demonstrated his political clout in the Senate and, most gallingly, had managed to present his action as a magnanimous gesture of national reconciliation.

Was this the result he had hoped for? I asked.

"Look," he replied. "I'm an old man now. I don't have any greater ambitions in my life. Everything I do, I do for my country. At this time I feel I have shown an attitude of reconciliation, but I don't see reconcilation coming from the other side."

What Pinochet was angling for, I guessed, was a political deal to protect him and other former members of his regime from liability for human-rights violations. Although they are partially protected by a retroactive amnesty decreed by the junta in 1978, there are loopholes in the law, and in recent years two of Pinochet's former military aides have been convicted of offenses not covered by the amnesty. Since Pinochet stepped down as the head of the Army, the number of human-rights suits has increased. Nine criminal lawsuits have recently been filed against Pinochet himself. One of them, brought by a former congresswoman, María Maluenda, charges him with responsibility for the murder of her son, a Communist whose throat was slit in 1985 after he was abducted by soldiers. Another, charging him with "genocide and illegal appropriation of property," was filed by the Communist Party secretary-general, Gladys Marín, whose husband "disappeared." Pinochet refuses to acknowledge personal liability for any of the incidents and has stated repeatedly that he can't be held responsible for what his subordinates may have done.

"That's a very generous offer, David. Would anyone else on the board like to take a vow of chastity?"

• •

"The criticisms of me are about things, many times, which I was unaware of," he says. "Many times I knew when it was too late. And all of those things which I thought were delicate I relayed to the courts. There were abuses on both sides. One day, they killed eleven of my *carabineros* with a bomb. Another day, they killed a naval officer. . . . So I say, 'So you suffered a lot. Well, and my people, didn't they suffer at all?' Human rights! I say there has to be human rights for both sides."

This isn't how Pinochet used to respond to criticisms of his record on human rights. A few years back, when searchers discovered more than a hundred victims of military executions, doubled up in coffins in a mass grave, Pinochet joked darkly, "Whoever buried them served the Fatherland well, by saving money on nails." This sort of remark makes it hard to refurbish Pinochet's reputation. "It'll be a long time before Chileans see him as a grandfatherly figure," Ambrósio Rodríguez, a close former aide, acknowledges. "It must be hard for him, knowing that half the nation hates his guts."

Supporters of Pinochet think that the criticism is unreasonable. "The only people persecuted were those who acted outside the law," the industrialist Hernán Briones says. Briones claims that Pinochet's "bad image" is due to disinformation spread by leftist Chileans who fled abroad after the coup. General Canessa agrees. "They say General Pinochet should tell where the *desaparecidos* are," he says with exasperation. "It's as though they thought General Pinochet has got a book like this one"—with a flourish, Canessa opens a book on his desk—"and he can look at it and say, 'Lucho Zapata. Zapata is . . . the people are buried in such-and-such a place.' How is a head of state supposed to know about this matter?"

IN September, a few days before the twenty-fifth anniversary of her father's death, Isabel Allende organized a concert, "Con Allende Siempre"—"With Allende Forever"—at the National Stadium. It was a benefit for the Allende Foundation. The stadium was a special place, she told me: not only was it where the era of repression under Pinochet began but—and, to her, more important—it was where her father celebrated his 1970 election victory.

I went to the concert at the invitation of Miguel Orellana Benado, a man in his early forties, who teaches philosophy. He is a distant relative by marriage of the Pinochets, and Salvador Allende was a friend of his family's. Santiago is a small town. After the coup, his family gave refuge to a woman widely believed to have been Allende's confidante and lover. The military were hunting for her, and the teen-age Miguel was given the task of driving the fugitive around the city in his father's Mercedes. In the bizarre circumstances of post-coup Chile, this was considered safer than keeping her in their house. Afterward, Orellana was sent abroad, and he spent the next dozen years in voluntary exile, studying in Israel, Sweden, Spain, London, and, finally, Oxford, where he wrote his Ph.D. thesis on the "philosophy of humor." He returned to Chile in the mid-eighties, and spends several days each week in the old seaside resort town of Viña del Mar, where he teaches at Valparaíso University. His parents also left Chile after the coup, but they never returned. Today they live in Madrid, where, he says, they have made new lives for themselves. At their age (they are in their eighties), he explains, there is little to come back for; most of their friends have died, and the Chile they once knew is long gone.

The scene outside the stadium was like a sixties-revival party. Long-haired kids and bearded leftists in tie-dyed shirts, red-and-black scarves, and Che Guevara T-shirts mingled with hawkers selling Che and Allende memorabilia. Mounted *carabineros* watched the concertgoers stream into the stadium, which soon was packed close to capacity. Perhaps seventy thousand people filled the bleachers and the field. The smell of pot wafted around; in the stands, members of the Communist Youth organization held up a banner saying "We didn't betray Allende." Another sign protested the charging of admission to the show. There was a huge banner with Allende's bespectacled face printed on it above the stage.

At one point, in between performances, the sound of machine-gun fire filled the stadium, and then several giant video screens showed black-and-white footage of the bombing of La Moneda. Over the din of the attack Allende's crackling last words, the defiant message he had recorded that day before he died, were heard on loudspeakers. As the audience watched the jets scream in again and again and the palace burst into flame, the enormity of what had happened hit home, and everyone began screaming, over and over again, "*Asesino! Asesino!*" "Murderer! Murderer!" It was their name for Augusto Pinochet.

A few weeks after I left Santiago, I met Pinochet in London, where he was having some medical checkups. He was staying in one of the modern five-star hotels on Park Lane favored by well-heeled Europeans, Arabs, and Americans. Lucía Pinochet, who was travelling with her father, had warned me that he was not feeling well and had cut back on his activities in London. He hadn't called his friends; even his tea with Margaret Thatcher had been scratched. In a few days, she said, he was to see a doctor about a hernia. She hoped it could be operated on, but the prognosis did not seem good. Because of her father's age, Lucía told me, they were afraid to put him under anesthesia: "Nobody wants to take responsibility when the patient is someone important."

Pinochet was in a good mood, and after we talked for a while he set off to visit Madame Tussaud's, for the umpteenth time; the British National Army Museum; and then to lunch at Fortnum & Mason. He bought some books about Napoleon, and was delighted when, during a stop at Burberry's, the head salesman recognized him and was courteous. The next morning, over coffee in an empty lounge at Pinochet's hotel, I asked him to clarify what exactly he had meant when he told me in Santiago that he was expecting a gesture of reconciliation from his Senate oppo-

INDIAN SUMMER II

As leaves fall from the trees, the body falls from the soul.
As memory signs transcendence, scales fall from the heart.
As sunlight winds back on its dark spool,
November's a burn and an ache.

A turkey buzzard logs on to the late-evening sky.
Residual blood in the oak's veins.
Sunday. Recycling tubs like flower bins at the curb.

Elsewhere, buried up to her armpits,
someone is being stoned to death.
Elsewhere, transcendence searches for us.
Elsewhere, this same story is being retold by someone else.

The heavenly way has been lost,
no use to look at the sky.
Still, the stars, autumnal stars, start to flash and transverberate.
The body falls from the soul, and the soul takes off,
a wandering, moral drug.

This is an end without a story.
This is a little bracelet of flame around your wrist.
This is the serpent in the Garden,
her yellow hair, her yellow hair.

We live in two landscapes, as Augustine might have said,
One that's eternal and divine,
and one that's just the back yard,
Dead leaves and dead grass in November, purple in spring.

—Charles Wright

nents. "Reconciliation has to come from both sides," he said.

"Yes, but what kind of gesture is it you're looking for?" I asked.

"A gesture!" he shouted hoarsely. When I repeated the question, he exploded: "To put an end to the lawsuits! There's more than eight hundred of them. Including some cases that have already finished, but they reopen them again. They always go back to the same thing, the same thing."

Over the last twenty years, hundreds of cases have been brought against members of the military and intelligence services. Most of them have been dropped, and Pinochet has never had to appear in court. But this may change. Lucía Pinochet told me that in the judicial investigation into the killings of the four men after her father's near-assassination in 1986 troubling new evidence of official complicity had emerged. "It now seems they were murdered," she said, "not killed in an armed confrontation, which is what his men told him." She said that she had been with her father when he was informed by an aide about the incident. He had asked, "What happened to our guys?" "No casualties, *mi General*," the aide replied. According to Lucía, Pinochet had looked surprised, and asked, "None?" The answer, again, was "No." Lucía told him that the story sounded suspicious to her, but he had shrugged and said, "Well, that's what they say," and that was the end of it.

Lucía said she was telling me this so that I could understand that her father had been "harmed" by his officers, who "isolated him" and "didn't always tell him the truth about things, so as to make themselves look better, or to cover things up." It had always frustrated her, she said, that he seemed to give more credence to what his aides told him than to what she said. In her doting daughter's way, what Lucía wanted me to believe was that her father was guilty only of naïveté, and of trusting his men too much.

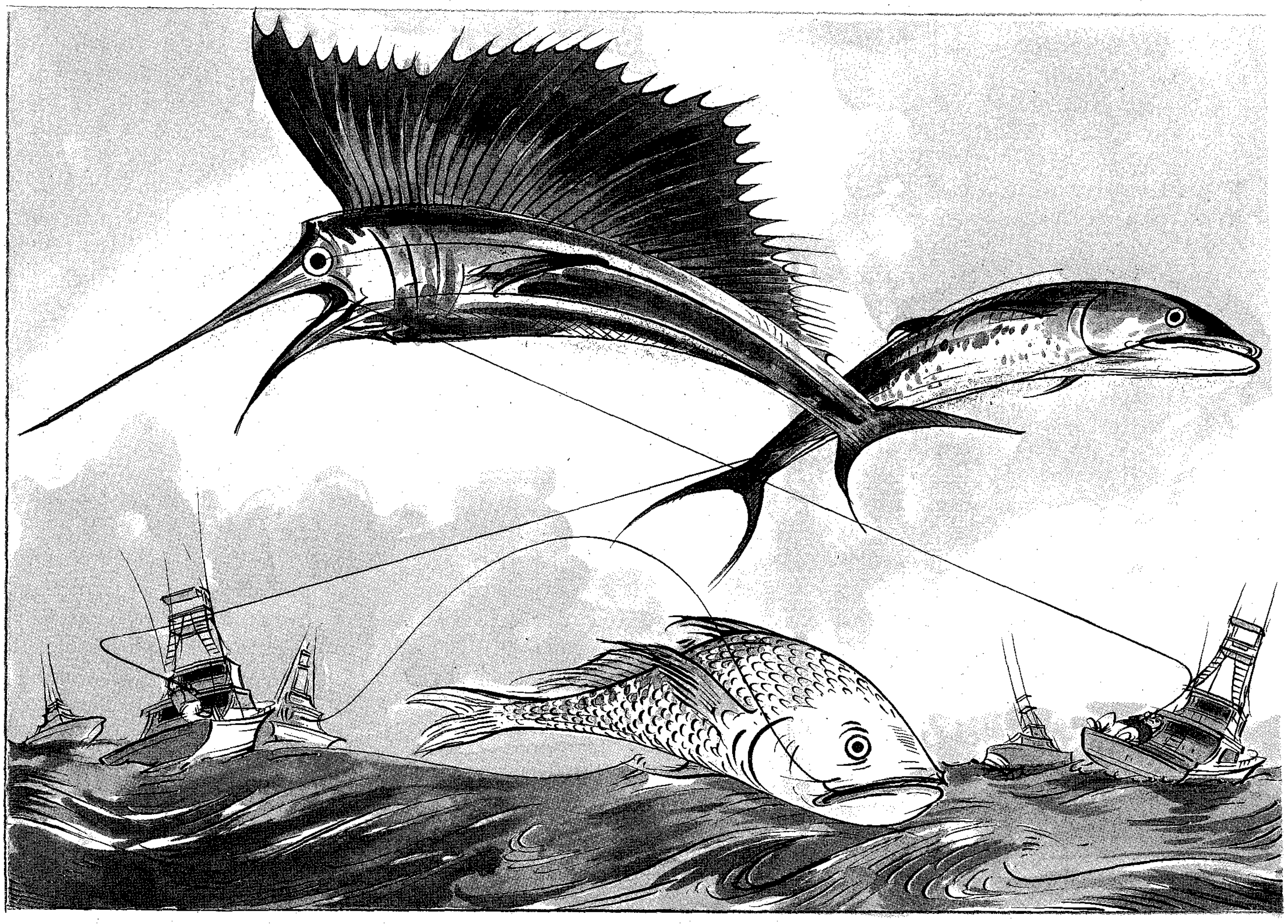
Lucía told me that her father's visit to London might well be his last. His physical problems were catching up with him. Besides, things weren't the same in London. People didn't seem to recognize him anymore. The Burberry's salesman was an exception. She was hoping he would feel well enough, after his medical examination, to come with her to Paris, to visit Napoleon's tomb.

HISTORY, and Pinochet's fascination with it, featured heavily in our talks. He expressed his admiration for Napoleon and for the Romans, and we also discussed Fidel Castro, whom he seemed to respect for standing up for his beliefs, and for being a "nationalist." When it came to Mao, too, he seemed curiously uncritical. He described a visit to Mao's tomb, and his voice fell into a dramatic hush: "They took me to a large temple, immense, how can I tell you? Like the American Congress building. Where, every day, thousands of people take flowers to Mao. I went to that temple, but Mao isn't there. Mao is in a second temple further on, where all the walls are of black marble. In the middle is Mao's catafalque. What a monument!—of silence. Dark . . . half-light, and the catafalque."

What thoughts had come to him? I asked. After all, he was in the presence of one of the icons of twentieth-century Communism. "I had a very simple thought," Pinochet replied. "I remembered the verse of Bécquer"—the nineteenth-century Spanish poet Gustavo Adolfo—"which says, 'Only the dead remain.' Because the grandiosity of the place—the mausoleum, Mao's catafalque, the darkness—is imposing. All Mao's power has been reduced to that. And I think it's a matter worthy of further study and reflection: how, after having possessed such impressive power in China, after having disposed of the lives and deaths of human beings, he ends up in a catafalque, alone, in a place the size of a stadium, completely covered in black marble."

I asked Pinochet how he hoped to be remembered by history, and he said, "As a man who loved his Fatherland, and served it all his life. I am eighty years old, and I know nothing else but service. I hope that they do justice to my memory. Each person will interpret it as he wishes." ♦

"I name this place Terra Incognita."



THE SPORTING SCENE

CATCH-AND-DISSECT

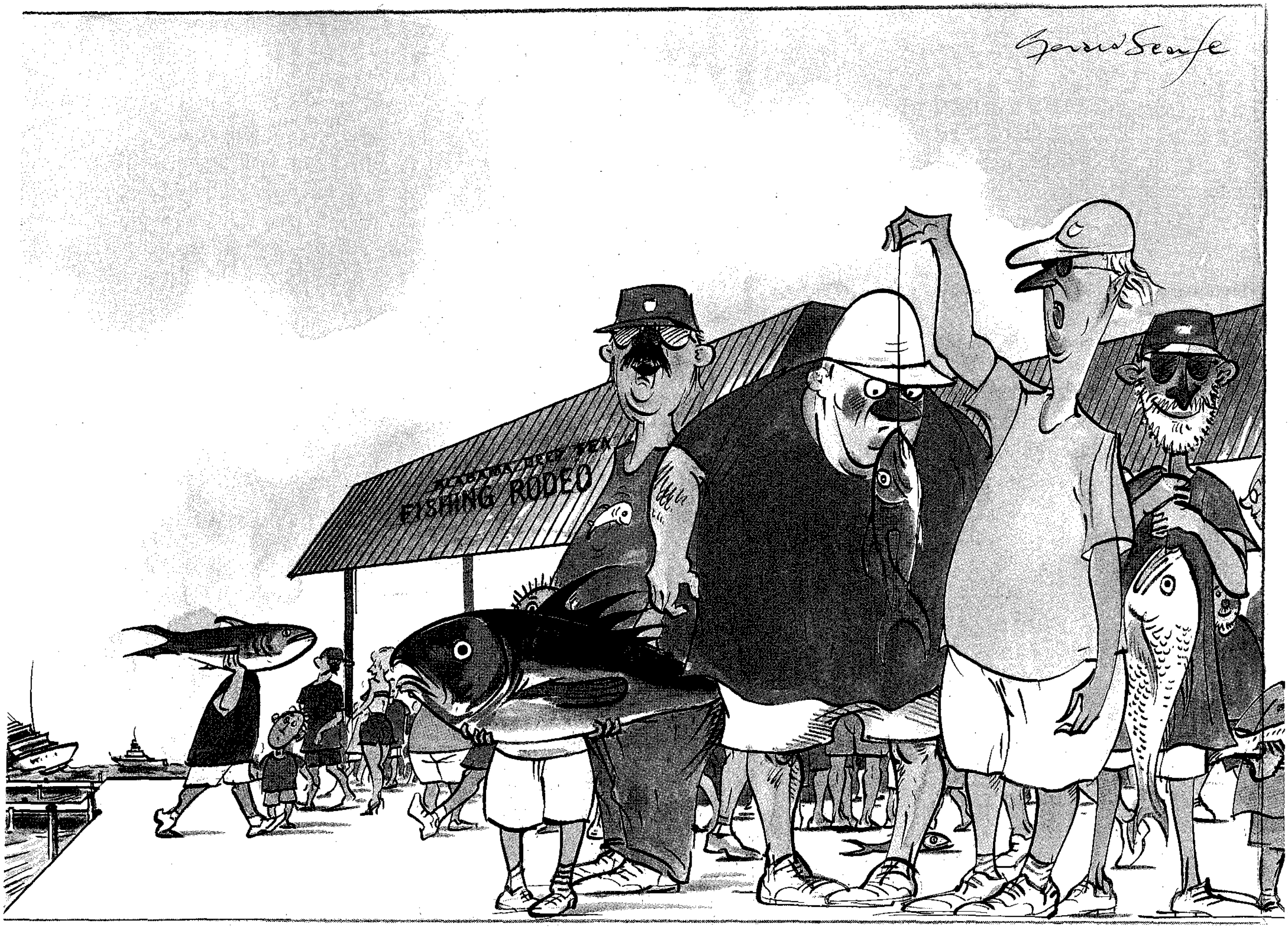
The Alabama Deep Sea Fishing Rodeo has twenty-seven hundred competitors and one visiting ichthyologist.

BY JOHN McPHEE

THE boats come in through Petit Bois Pass, make an arcuate turn in Mississippi Sound, and line up on final in the Aloe Bay Channel. The afternoon sun is behind them. The boats in the middle distance are indistinct, and the far ones are lost in summerhaze. They are like airliners coming in from the west, descending in an endless queue.

Willy Bemis is waiting at the dock. The judges' stand is behind him. In the fish bin there—on five tons of solid ice—are redfish, lookdowns, stargazers, amberjacks, and kings, not to mention congers, morays, spadefish, ladyfish, catfish, bonitas, barracudas, and guaguanches. In the sense that he means to pay nothing, Willy is begging fish. As the competitors tie up and reveal their entries in the Alabama Deep Sea Fishing Rodeo—twenty-seven hundred competitors, in eight hundred boats—Willy casts a selective eye on the catch. When he decides he wants something and makes a pitch for it, his line is so incongruous that most of the fishermen seem to grant him the benefit of the doubt. Dressed in shorts and sandals and a T-shirt covered with sharks and other fish, he tells them that he is a professor of ichthyology from the University of Massachusetts, and that his purpose in coming to the rodeo is to collect skeletons.

As American fishing tournaments go, this rodeo is, in various respects, at or near the No. 1: number of boats, number of fisherwomen, number of fishermen, number of species. The last is what attracts Willy. Most tournaments award prizes in one category, and some in four or five categories. These fish, though, are coming from the Fertile Crescent, the fishery piñata of the Gulf of Mexico, in forty-five thousand square miles of which the action takes place; the catch is brought here to Dauphin Island, at the mouth of Mobile Bay; the prizewinners are in thirty categories; and they will range in length from four inches to eight and a half feet.



In the manner of a major golf tournament, a large leader board keeps the crowd informed. Among the categorical leaders of the moment are Robert Groh, with a hundred-and-fifty-six-pound tuna; Creighton T. Parker, with a thirty-three-pound wahoo; Melvin Dunn, with a thirty-three-pound barracuda; John Holley, with a fifty-one-pound grouper; Michael Burgess, with a six-and-a-half-pound flounder; and Jeff Gaddy, with a gafftopsail catfish a hair under eight pounds. Competitors are out there in twelve-foot homemade johnboats fishing "inshore" for redfish, flounder, and speckled trout. Competitors are out there in big cruisers that carry four hundred and fifty gallons of gasoline and troll along the lip of the continental slope. With fourteen rods in rod holders, brass reels, the big boats, as they come in, bristle like porcupines. Ladders go up to their flying bridges, where other ladders go on up to tuna platforms. They have outriggers, gin poles, venturi windshields, and fighting chairs that would not attract attention in a barbershop. The occupants of these vessels tend to be wearing one-way sunglasses that flash carnival colors—red, green, orange, purple, and blue. When these fishermen are milling about the dock, it appears to be a disco. Other fishermen have big tattoos and no sunglasses.

Resting on the bridge of Willy's nose are two clear lenses, surrounded by gold circles. His hair falls long in all directions from a bald spot at the top. He is a professor with an inquiring mustache, and enough extra weight to make him seem trustworthy—enough to help him float. More, he is amiable, straightforward, and benign. He explains his way of working the fishermen. "I just stand here and see how badly they want their fish." After a moment, he adds, "We came to get tarpon, ladyfish, and sharks, but we'll take as much diversity as we can handle."

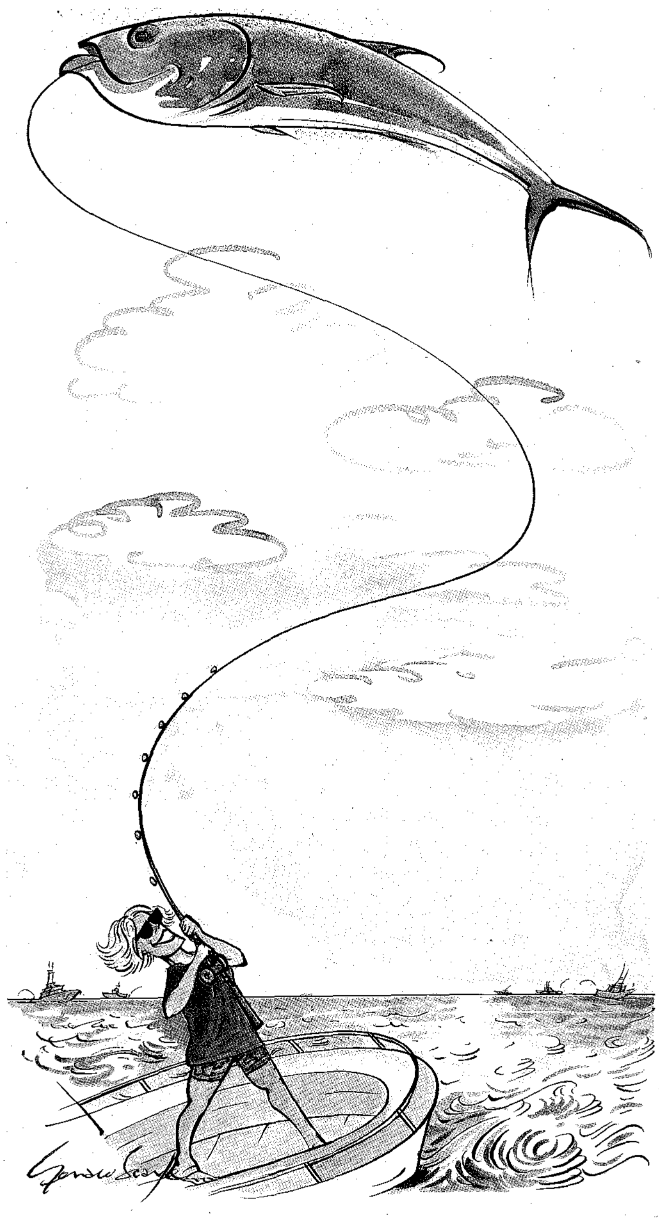
Now comes Steve McConnell, in Play 'N' Hookie, with a hammerhead shark. Play 'N' Hookie is powered by a two-hundred-and-twenty-five-horse Johnson outboard, and is twenty-one feet long. The shark is nearly nine feet long. Steve—compact, wiry, his hair close cut—presents his ticket to the Mobile Jaycees who officiate the tournament. A portable crane on a bright-red truck moves toward the dock. It lifts the hammerhead out of the boat and moves it to a fish rack, a wooden arch twelve feet tall—a gibbet. There the hammerhead is hung, ogled by the crowd, and weighed (a hundred and sixty-three pounds). It looks a little like a steer and a little more like nothing else in the world, this creature with a widespread rectangular cranium like the bar antenna on a spinning radar. Jerry Walden, the crane operator, has been coming here ten years and has picked up some heavy fish. He remembers a fisherman who came in with a three-hundred-pound shark longer than his boat.

And now a man in sandals with sharks on his shirt appears before McConnell mentioning marine science, mentioning the possibility that McConnell's great fish could find a home in Massachusetts. So far, McConnell's day has included getting out of bed at 4 A.M. and fighting a shark for two hours. He was thirty miles off Dauphin Island, using fifty-

ILLUSTRATIONS BY GERALD SCARFE

pound-test line, a fifteen-hundred-pound-test leader, and two hooks baited with a ten-pound bonita. The hammerhead hammered it. And when all was over, and the fish, exhausted, neared the boat, McConnell saw that a ling, or cobia, about twenty-five pounds, had come up with it, and a second shark was chasing the ling. McConnell's wife and two friends were with him. They went to the rail to see the second shark. Immediately, they all stepped back and clustered in the middle of the boat. The second hammer, as McConnell would describe it, was the largest shark he had seen in fifteen years of shark fishing—"a monster." Now, contemplatively, McConnell looks at Willy Bemis. "Massachusetts?" he says, and donates his fish. An Ohioan who was trained at Cornell, Michigan, Berkeley, and Chicago, Willy is a world-class ichthyologist—co-author, with Lance Grande, of a six-hundred-and-ninety-page book called "A Comprehensive Phylogenetic Study of Amiid Fishes (Amiidae) Based on Comparative Skeletal Anatomy"—but he is only in his second year at Dauphin Island, and this is his first hammer ever. The crane lowers the fish into Willy's pickup. The nose is near the cab and the tail is out the back. Willy says, "If I live to be a hundred, there's nothing like the first hammerhead you have as a specimen."

Willy adds other species—including a white sea trout and the gafftopsail catfish—and takes off for his lab. The dorsal fin of this catfish will rise so far and so acutely that it closely models the highest sail on the mainmast of a schooner. Otherwise, the cat looks like an ordinary bullhead, barbels and all. The fish ride three miles down a palm-lined boulevard to the old Army post around Fort Gaines, beside the mouth of Mobile Bay, where floating mines were ignored by David Farragut, in 1864, when he sailed through, saying, "Damn the torpedoes, full speed ahead!" People now pronounce the name of the island as if it were "dolphin," which, as it happens, is the primary meaning of *dauphin*. The Army post has become the Dauphin Island Sea Lab, marine-science laboratory of a consortium of Alabama colleges and universities. In a breezeway between two buildings, Willy has created a dissection room, with a floor of crushed shells, screen walls at the two ends, and a four-foot belt-driven fan. With the help of two assistants, he has dug two offal pits, found a darkroom sink and plumbed it himself, and set up an operating table with a surface area of twenty-four square feet.



This was neither the scene nor the fish she had imagined.

The hammer is on the table, catercornered. Nonetheless, it overhangs. Willy picks up a Rapala filleting knife, its thin blade eight inches long—the same kind of knife I use at home to fillet shad that weigh five pounds. Also on the table are razor blades and a scalpel. Idly, he slides the palm of one hand away from the shark's head and along its flank; gingerly, he moves the hand in the other direction. "It's smooth one way, but like rose thorns and will tear your flesh the other way. This is caused by a shagreen of denticles. Placoid scales. The skin of the hammerhead was used like fine sandpaper at one time." The wallet in Willy's pocket is made of carp skin.

The hammerhead is male. It has two claspers—hard penislike pelvic appendages. "That is really, really, really fancy," Willy says admiringly. "They penetrate the female and shoot." Internal fertilization, standard for sharks, is not uncommon in other fishes, he remarks, and he slides his knife through the big shark as if he were cleaning a cod. "You're taking off a hundred pounds before you dry the skeleton." A large mass of muscle plops onto the table.

"Every few years, a guy makes a name for himself by claiming to find bone in a shark. The consensus is that there is no bone."

"So how can you be collecting the skeleton? What is the skeleton?"

"Calcified cartilage. The distinction between this type of cartilage and bone is somewhat subtle. True bone has bone cells, calcified cartilage does not. You would need a microscope." Another muscle mass falls off the fish, joining the first one on the table. The shark's vertebral column is becoming well exposed. "The hammerhead has negligible rib structure," he observes, and, with a heavy cut, he starts another blob on its way to the pits.

Ready for finer work, he picks up a large steel kitchen spoon and uses it as a scraper, working rapidly, removing berms of shark tartare. Hammerheads will kill people. Normally, they eat fish, squid. He drops the spoon and opens the mouth wide, demonstrating its great flexibility, displaying its dental coronet and the hyoid arch. "The hyoid arch is suspended from the jaw by the interhyal, which allows the hyoid arch to move independent of the jaw. It's the only joint that connects the hyoid arch to the rest of the skull." Snap. He goes back to work with the spoon. The Navy became very interested in sharks and shark repellents after the U.S.S. Indianapolis disaster, in the Second World War, he says, and much of what we know about the sensory biology of sharks—their brains, their nervous systems—we owe to Navy funding. Look at that weird head—leading the fish like the crossbar of the letter "T"—with eyes at the extremes, nearly half a metre apart. The hammerhead's vision is stereoscopic. The nostrils are long slits, also well separated, like leading-edge grooves near the tips of a wing, allowing three-point olfactory discrimination, receiving scents from great distances. All over the roof of the skull are the gray peppery speckles of the ampullae of Lorenzini, which detect electric fields, maybe including the earth's magnetic field. "These animals live in a very different sensory world than people do. They're detecting things we never detect. The lateral line—a distant sense of touch—senses movement in the water column by detecting changes in water pressure. The hammerhead has a very large brain, comparable to some mammals'. People think of sharks as 'swimming noses.' There's a lot about them they don't understand."

Lateral lines are thin tubes along the sides of fish. A submarine passing fifty fathoms below a ship will feel the pressure of the ship, and note it with instruments less sensitive than a hammerhead's lateral line. The Indianapolis was the heavy cruiser that delivered the fission bomb Little Boy to Tinian. After the ship left Tinian, alone, it was fatally torpedoed. Sailors were in the water for as much as ten days. Of the eight hundred and eighty-three who died, a great many were killed by sharks.

Eric Hilton, who is completing his Ph.D. under Willy at U Mass, removes from the hammerhead a plug of flesh to be studied for its DNA. Hilton's rufous ponytail and pharisaical beard offset the barbered hairlessness of Willy's other assistant. Tall, bare to the waist, he is an undergraduate named Mark Grgurovic. Dangling from a chain around Mark's neck is a golden fish.

Willy opens the hammerhead's body cavity. The liver, brought out on the tabletop, is a large scale model of Oahu. Why so much of it?

"It contains a lot of lipid material, which is light. It is thought to help with the fact that sharks have no swim bladder. They are very agile in the water column. They have to be neutrally buoyant to be agile. The liver helps that happen."

Would Willy comment on the conventional wisdom and litigatory metaphor that sharks can never stop swimming, have to remain in motion as long as they live, because they have no air bladder?

"A lot of sharks stop swimming. A lot of sharks are bottom feeders."

The shark's stomach is now on the table, too, and it is such a gross and loaded bag that it could easily have inside it something I would prefer not to see. As Willy slices into it, I nearly look away. It contains large hunks of large fish—whole severed segments of twenty-pound, thirty-pound fish.

Opening a thick tube about fourteen inches long, he reveals the hammerhead's spiral-valve intestine, which corkscrews around a stringlike membrane in the axial center of the tube. "Food goes down the spiral, which has a tremendous surface area. It's a Slinky inside of a pipe."

Willy now opens the penetrating end of a clasper, the part analogous to the glans of a penis. He slices it the long way and spreads it out to show the range of its ability to expand. "Doesn't that look nasty," he comments. "Claspers go in the cloaca and then spread out."

The shark is so long that Willy and Eric break the skeleton into five pieces before putting them in a tub of alcohol for drying. The tub is half of a fifty-five-gallon drum—sliced the long way, like the clasper. The alcohol draws nearly all the water from the tissue, making a great stride in the skeleton's advance toward an exhibition cabinet—exactly what happens in a person who drinks like a fish.

The collection of fish skeletons at the American Museum of Natural History, in New York, is in many respects unrivalled, and can be compared only with skeletal collections in London, Paris, and Chicago. There are more than ten thousand fish skeletons in the American Museum, and about a quarter of them came from the Alabama Deep Sea Fishing Rodeo. Most of these specimens were dissected and prepared by Gareth Nelson, an American Museum ichthyologist, who, over the years, scraped and dried on Dauphin Island more than twenty-five hundred skeletons representing two hundred and fifty-three species. A year ago, on the verge of retirement, Nelson brought Willy Bemis with him and showed him how to work the rodeo. Then Nelson went off to Australia. The American Museum, in Willy's words, "is out of the fish-skeleton-collecting business now," and Willy has an obsessional dream. He sees in his mind's eye a Massachusetts Museum of Natural History. He has already sketched a logo for it. He has designed an M.M.N.H. green-and-gold flag, which is flapping even now on a pole within a few feet of the space in which he is dissecting. He knows just where on the U Mass campus, in Amherst, he intends the building to be. Already, he has raised $1.3 million. He needs twenty.

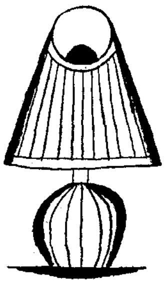
SPONSORED fishing teams are in the rodeo. Young, photogenic pros, they go from tournament to tournament, representing boat makers, engine makers, or tackle companies. Appearing on the dock in essentially identical clothes, they look like assistant basketball coaches: Team Big Boy, in green and gold; Ranger Sportfishermen, in blue. Their boats are as showroom-fresh as they are.

Second afternoon, and Blue Monday ties up—a homemade boat flying two Confederate flags. She is skippered by a competitor who is also a commercial fisherman. He has shrimp stickers on his wheelhouse and trawl doors aft. Blue Monday, imperfectly fashioned from quarter-inch steel plate, is possibly a sister ship of the African Queen. The skipper's face is quizzical and darkly bronzed. His eyes seem to be narrowing on something they can't quite hit. He says he has asbestosis. He says he has been shot eleven times, mainly in Vietnam. He says he has had a heart attack and lung disease, and each day he lives for the day. Crediting a bumper sticker, he says veterans sleep under bridges while a draft dodger sleeps in the White House. His bluefish and red snappers are not going to appear on the leader board. He casts off resignedly, and leaves.

Ynot comes down the Aloe Bay Channel. Ynot is a Fountain, a thirty-one-foot open fisherman, with a fineness ratio (length to width) of such elegance that it seems to slice—rather than part—the quiet water. Watching it approach, Jerry Walden remarks that it's "a high-dollar boat." Two people are aboard: a man, at the wheel, and a smiling—not to say exuberant—young woman eying the dock.

They are father and daughter. Five feet tall, wearing shorts, a T-shirt, and New Balance boat shoes, she is as trig and pretty as the boat—blond and fine-featured, with the shape of a gymnast. Ynot waits for an opening and then moves into a slip.

They got up at four, at their home, near Pascagoula, Mississippi, and at six were trolling off the Chandeleur Islands in thirty-five feet of water. Due south of Biloxi Bay, the Chandeleurs are seventy-five miles east of New Orleans. The skipper on this run was John Colle (kól-ē), and the fisherwoman Natalie Colle. With two drift lines and a third line on a downrigger, she was fishing for king mackerel. On each line she used a single hook and a treble hook and a hundred-pound-test metal leader. ("Mackerel have such sharp teeth.") The bait on each line was a ribbonfish, "which we call a silver eel, a skinny eel—the single hook goes through its mouth and nose and the treble hook goes on its back to make it seem to be swimming right, even though it's dead." The line itself was thirty-pound-test, appropriate for a king. Each rod was seven feet long—"a king/ling rod, a standard king-mackerel rod." The rods were held vertically in hardware rod holders.



Off the curving Chandeleurs, the Colles were following birds. ("Where there's birds, there's baitfish; where there's baitfish, there's fish.") They trolled around the feeding schools. ("It was real slick water, real calm. We could see the schools.") Suddenly, one of the drift lines moved. Natalie picked up the rod. For forty-five minutes, the fish on the line held her off. It felt sizable, and Natalie wondered how it might place among the tournament kings. When the fish came to the boat, though, it was a blacktip shark, about five feet long, with three sharksuckers riding on it. She released it, and rerigged the line.

Something hit heavily at noon. The rod was in a rod holder. The reel, on light drag, started "zinging."

"We had the clicker on. Tournament rules—you reel it in yourself. I went to the rod, put it in my rod belt. I'm thinking, It's a big king. A real big king. The prize king! Before long, it jumped. It shook in the air. It was a tarpon! Again, he jumped. He twisted in the air. We call it skyrocketing."

What Natalie had on her line was like this—described for all time by Thomas McGuane, in the collection he titled "An Outside Chance":

> The closest thing to a tarpon in the material world is the Steinway piano. The tarpon, of course, is a game fish that runs to extreme sizes, while the Steinway piano is merely an enormous musical instrument, largely wooden and manipulated by a series of keys. However, the tarpon when hooked and running reminds the angler of a piano sliding down a precipitous incline and while jumping makes cavities and explosions in the water not unlike a series of pianos falling from a great height. If the reader, then, can speculate in terms of pianos that herd and pursue mullet and are themselves shaped like exaggerated herrings, he will be a very long way toward seeing what kind of thing a tarpon is. Those who appreciate nature as we find her may rest in the knowledge that no amount of modification can substitute the man-made piano for the real thing—the tarpon. Where was I?

When her tarpon jumped, Natalie saw a spray of blood leaving the gills. This was neither the scene nor the fish she had imagined, and she felt an impulse to cut the line and let the tarpon go. Her father, John Colle, suggested that she stay with it. In all his years, he had never caught a tarpon. His father's dream had been to catch a tarpon. He never did. And now his father's granddaughter had a tarpon firmly hooked—a fish at least as big as she was. The tarpon, in a sense, was hanging by a thread. Her monofilament line was thirty-pound-test.

An hour passed as Natalie dealt with the tarpon. "He fought and fought. He would surface and jump. He stayed strong the whole time. I'd huff and puff and reel and get him in close, and he'd take off again. At least ten times he did that. I thought the rod was going to break. It was totally bending over. Then he would sound, and sit there like a dead weight. Every time he did surface, he would take my line back out and just sit there."

John Colle had shut off the engines. Now and again, the tarpon pulled the boat. This way. That way. Several times, Natalie walked completely around its periphery "trying to keep him clear."

After an hour and fifteen minutes, little had changed. "Was I exhausted? No, I'm in pretty good shape. I work out a lot. I do triathlons. I got, if anything, kind of bored. You have to keep the rod tip up the whole time. I'm kind of a hyper person. My attention span isn't real long. When he sat there, I could not reel him in. So I just sat there, too. Each time, he came up a little more slowly. He would make an arch and go down again. When he was making the arch, you could see the brilliance of his body shining off the water. I thought, This is a beautiful animal and he's fallen into a terrible trap. He came close to the boat four times, regained energy, and went off. After an hour and a half, we missed him twice with the gaff. The third time, my father and I hoisted him into the boat together. My first tarpon. My first time, for sure. I had no plans to catch that fish."

She decided to go in and enter the fish "before he loses a lot of weight"—fifty miles to Dauphin Island. As Ynot reached the sound and swung into the Aloe Bay Channel, she was, as she would later describe herself, "beaming with excitement." She was thinking, This is going to be great. Maybe I'll set a record. Maybe as a woman angler I've accomplished something. It all seems worthwhile—the heat, the sun, the effort.

Now Ynot, after waiting its turn, at last nudges the dock. A Jaycee says to Natalie, who is standing in the bow, "You have a kill permit—right?"

"A kill permit?" she repeats.

"A fifty-dollar tarpon kill permit. You can't enter the fish if you don't have one."

"But I didn't know I was going to catch it—I wasn't trying to catch it."

The Jaycee says he is sorry.

"We were not aware of it."

The Jaycee repeats that he is sorry.

Her great surprise is not as great as her palpable disappointment. Her triumph in vapor, she is struggling to deal with the psychological bends, and in this moment is confronted by a professor from Massachusetts saying, "Can we have your fish? We're marine scientists. We're going to do research."

She is bewildered but she gives him the tarpon. "All right," she says slowly. "You can have him. At least, it's good for research." The tarpon is lifted by two men and carried in a trough to a large scale. Ninety pounds. The tarpon is driven off in an A.T.V.

Tarpon permits are a requirement of the State of Alabama. Over the years at the deep-sea rodeo, tarpon permits have not been required, because they have always been superseded by the "permit for scientific collecting" that pertained to the American Museum of Natural History. Because Gareth Nelson retired and the tournament was not sure that anyone would be here to replace him, the tarpon permit is mentioned on the competitors' tickets this year for the first time—mentioned, as Natalie Colle sees it, "in little bitty writing."

The Colles might have won prizes for most beautiful boat, most beautiful competitor, most beautiful fish, but those are not categories in this tournament, and Ynot goes up the channel into the haze. She is heading back to Pascagoula, the largest deepwater port in Mississippi, where a tugboat named Natalie is one of seven vessels in the fleet of Colle Towing—"the place with the big American flag"—where her great-great-grandfather worked, and where she works now. What Natalie Colle doesn't know is that her tarpon's complete and bushy structure, mounted on mahogany, is destined for a wall at the Massachusetts Museum of Natural History.

"If we do a nice job with this fish, it's a major exhibit piece," Willy remarks at the dissecting table, knife in hand. "This is the largest living representative of a group that hasn't changed much in a hundred and twenty-five million years. They are the fishlike elopomorphs, and are generally thought to be closely related to eels. Eels and tarpon have similar larvae—leptocephali—so thin they're almost transparent. I mean big larvae, some of them like a foot long. As larvae metamorphose either into eels or into fishlike elopomorphs, they shrink. It's counterintuitive. Bonefish and ladyfish are elopomorphs. The group also has an interesting fossil history and is probably among the most primitive of the teleosts. We study them to get that insight."

In a day or two, Natalie will send her tarpon's measurements ("I'm sixty inches, he was nine inches longer") to J. T. Reese Taxidermy, Inc., in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, which will feed the data into a computer and reproduce the tarpon in glass and fibreglass, and send it to Pascagoula. Willy, meanwhile, at the dissecting table, begins to remove the tarpon's skin. With the knife, he is as slow and careful now as he was swift and casual in addressing the shark, because the tarpon has three thousand bones, including six sets of intermuscular bones, the tips of which touch the skin. Eventually, he holds up what appears to be a vest of chain mail. A single tarpon scale is nearly as large as a playing card, and the third of it that is not overlapped by other scales is covered with what appears to be silver plate. You can read the age of the tarpon in the rings of the scale. This one is thirteen years old. Tarpon scales are deciduous—lightly attached, easily removed—and are almost pure bone. People collect them as souvenirs and paint seascapes on them where they are shell white, above the silver.

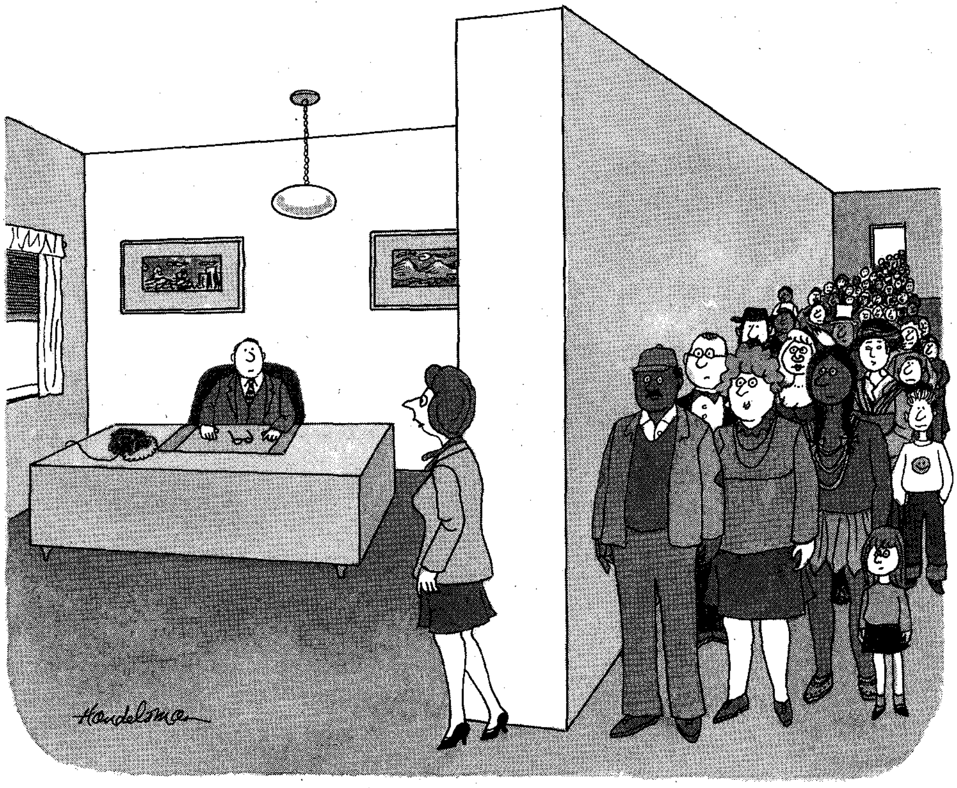
The flesh looks wine red, but the red muscle is only a veneer over a white inner mass. When fish swim idly, routinely, steadily, Willy says, they are using red muscle, but when, for any reason, fish require great speed they use white muscle. The flesh of the tarpon, like the flesh of an orange, is divided into segments. In this tarpon, each segment is about half an inch wide. The intermuscular bones are ossified connective tissue between the flesh segments. The intermuscular bones are attached variously to ribs and to the vertebral column. They are so numerous that the skeleton, to a remarkable extent, will resemble the complete fish. With the filleting knife, Willy makes long slices between the intermusculars—angling with them toward the tail—and then begins scraping with the cooking spoon, driving shredded flesh along and off the bones as if he were cleaning a pitchfork.

Detaching the skull from the bony curve that is known as the pectoral girdle is not easy without an axe, but Willy patiently succeeds, commenting as he works: "Fishes have a loose pelvic girdle, just floating, whereas the pectoral girdle is attached to the back of the skull tightly—the reverse of land creatures like us, tight in the pelvis and loose in the shoulders."

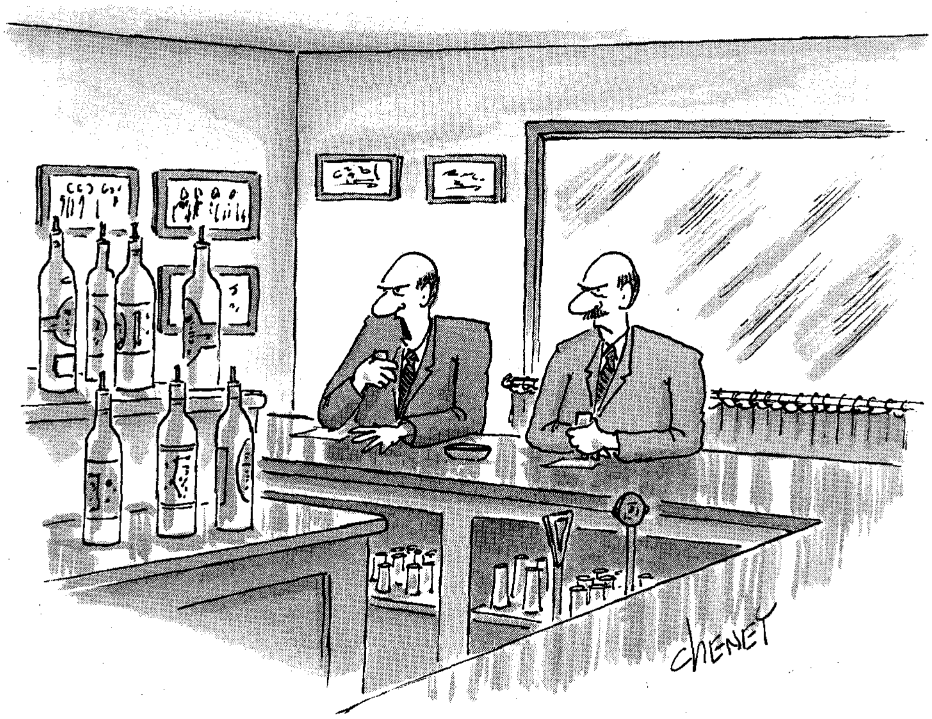
Now he has the tarpon's head in his two hands and, with a little pressure, causes the mouth to open so wide that a small car could park inside it. Or so it seems. "The hyoid drops down, the top of the head comes up, then the two sides go out. What an incredible expansion! It flares the suspensorium!" Between the lower jaws is a bone called the gular, common in fossil fishes but rare in the modern world. Also evident, with steel connective wire, are Natalie Colle's hooks—one in the urohyal bone, ventral to the gill arches, and the other in connective tissue between the urohyal and the lower jaw.

Going into the tarpon's swim bladder, Willy removes a thick, spongy cord that resembles lung tissue. "These fish come up to the surface and gulp air," he comments. "It's because of this special tissue in the swim bladder. In the Florida Keys, tarpon come up, breathe air, and eat what tourists feed them."

With a wire brush, he scrubs the cavity of the tarpon along the bottom of the



"Senator, the American people, whom you often mention in your speeches, would like a word with you."



"I knew he couldn't be trusted with all that hair."

• •

backbone, locus of the kidneys. You could knit a wool sweater with two tarpon ribs. Not long ago, Willy was diving in the Cayman Islands, and he went into a natural tunnel in a reef. The tunnel was full of tarpon. Hundreds of tarpon. "They are not skittish," he says. "They are so peaceful. They let you swim around them." Much like caribou.

ALBERT REYNOLDS, a Mobile stockbroker who is a former chairman of the rodeo, takes me out to the action in his twenty-two-foot single-engine Grady-White. Through early-morning air too thick to be haze, too thin to be fog, we go to the western tip of Dauphin Island and then run south about seven miles. Suddenly, in the cottony seascape, looms a great standing structure, more than two hundred yards long, in three parts joined by long aerial footbridges. Rising through fifty-seven feet of water and continuing on up ten stories, the Triple Rig, as the fishermen call it, is Chevron 864MO, largest of the numerous platforms that collectively produce a hundred million dollars' worth of natural gas in this area of the Gulf each year. Broad and squarish, the central structure resembles an oil refinery, with Erector-set skeletal girders. Three pipes come up beneath it, because it is the center of three radial wells. Its highest point is a long, cranelike tilted arm, whose upper end is abloom with orange flame. A safety device, it is known on the rig as "the flare." Signs wherever you look say "Danger Poison Gas H_2S." The tower at one end supports a three-story house, the crew's quarters. The tower at the other end accommodates a fourth well. Under the connecting footbridges are passages of open water, where boats can go through the platform. Eight boats are fishing here. A couple are tied to the structure. Most are trolling. Like shuttles going back and forth in a loom, ours and the other trolling boats woof the Triple Rig. The oil and gas platforms of the Gulf have the same effect as artificial reefs. In a soft-bottomed environment unappealing to invertebrates, they offer hard surfaces for the likes of barnacles and clams, which in turn attract reef fish and transient species. Out of sight of land, out in the marine wild, one of the best places to go fishing is under the Chevron flare.

One boat, surprisingly, is Play 'N' Hookie. Where we are fishing earnestly for prizewinning kings, Steve McConnell has stopped off to fish for shark bait. He is fishing for bonitas to take to deeper water and drag past the noses of hammerheads. The symbiosis between oil or gas platforms and recreational fishing is personified in Steve McConnell. Half his time, he lives on a rig. He is an operator of oil rigs. Every other week, he leaves his home, in Mobile, to spend seven nights headquartered on Eugene Island 42, about fifteen miles from land, south of Morgan City, Louisiana, at the Atchafalaya Basin Sea Buoy. Frequently, he fishes from the rig, catching king mackerel, red snapper, dolphin. Employed by Sonat—a company that sells its crude oil to Shell, Chevron, Mobil, and Exxon—he runs seven other rigs, too, across four hundred miles of the Gulf. Every day, he flies from rig to rig in a helicopter, and fishing rods are always aboard.

If you float a wooden plank, fish will be attracted to its shadow and shelter. You can fish productively near the plank. If you don't have a plank, try an oil rig. The public-relations benefits of rig fishing have not been lost on the energy companies. Chevron, in fact, has a "Rigs to Reefs" program, in which rigs that have ceased to produce oil or gas are disengaged from the seabed, toppled onto their sides, and, in many cases, dragged to appropriate fishing sites.

Albert Reynolds has three lines out, thirty-pound-test, with stainless-steel leaders, and fishes them close to the boat, scarcely ten yards back. He outlines the thought processes that go on in king mackerels' brains: "Near the boat, they think they've got to get it and run. Way back there, they look it over and think something's wrong and go away." As baitfish he is using blue runners—foot-long jacks locally known as hard tails. Gentle-mannered and quietly bemused, now in his upper sixties, Albert Reynolds has been fishing the rodeo forty-five years. He once took a second prize with a speckled trout but "can't remember when." His boat is Shazam and his wife calls him Captain Marvel. He has been successful enough as an investor for this to qualify as a reference to his work. "You catch the right fish, you can make a lot of money," he remarks about the rodeo. It may not be the All-American Futurity at Ruidoso Downs, and it's not the P.G.A. championship, but as fishing tournaments go it has attractive money. There's a prize worth thirty thousand dollars for most over-all points, a five-thousand-dollar jackpot for the biggest king, and another hundred and twenty thousand dollars spread through the various categories. Rocky Marciano fished here.

Something hits a hard tail, and a reel zings. It is my turn to pick it up. The reel is rigged for right-handers, so I try turning it upside down, which makes Reynolds chuckle. It also doesn't work, and I fish right-handed. The thing on the line feels heavy. It is active in the water column. It is stronger than a bluefish. It feels like a big roe shad. As I hold up the rod tip toward the Chevron rig and the billowing flame, I pass the time, mentally, at an A.T.M. in New Jersey depositing the five thousand dollars. Nice fish. You can tell. You can feel it. Baby grand. And after eight or ten minutes it is out of the water and into Shazam. King mackerel. Forty-six inches long. Nineteen pounds, ten ounces.

I remember Willy Bemis saying about kings, "They're aggressive, torpedo-shape, fantastic animals. They're running very strong right now, fifty-pound size." I have at least caught dinner.

All afternoon at the judges' stand, fishermen arrive with long insulated white vinyl bags, like bulky ski bags zippered up for travel. These are king bags, so called, and the zippers open to reveal torpedo-shaped fantastic animals: a fifty-four-pound king, a sixty-one-pound king, a sixty-three-pound king. Robert Shipp, one of the judges, says, "The big kings are more than a hundred miles offshore. Fast boats go sixty miles an hour to get them. It is not uncommon for them to run a hundred and fifty miles to weigh 'em in."

Shipp, an ichthyologist at the University of South Alabama, is the author of "Dr. Bob Shipp's Guide to Fishes of the Gulf of Mexico." Long before he became an official of the tournament, he came to Dauphin Island every summer to teach his marine-vertebrate course at the academic sea lab. The immemorial judge of the tournament was Roy Martin, mayor of Panama City Beach, Florida. Over time, as prizes grew larger, and decisions with them, the mayoralty of Panama City Beach became an insufficient qualification for the rodeo bench. There came a great question: Is this a very small blue marlin or a very large white marlin? Roy Martin took the fifth. The tournament's underwriting bankers asked Bob Shipp if he would become assistant judge. Sure, he said. A student of the population biology of fishes, he was interested in the tournament for the fish. A question even more controversial soon arose as well: Is this a young king mackerel or a Spanish mackerel? Spanish mackerel have spots, and so do young kings, which resemble mature Spanish mackerel. This was all sort of academic until the jackpot prize for the biggest Spanish mackerel approached and then surpassed a couple of thousand dollars. Shipp—gray hair, equanimous mustache, handsome as a tenor—was addressed one day by a fisherman he describes as having "one or two teeth, breath of beer and garlic, and bloodshot eyes." The fisherman laid a fish before Shipp and said, "That beauty is a Spanish mackerel."

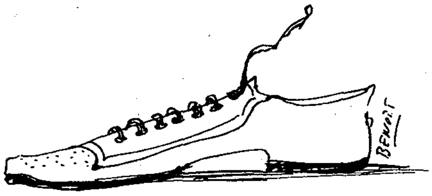
Shipp said, "I'm sorry. It's a small king."

The fisherman said, "I've got Dr. Bob Shipp's book in my boat. I'll get it and show you."

One of the rodeo's prize categories is Most Unusual. It illuminates the tournament, because a fish of any size can win it. A fish four inches long can be honored beside a tarpon. The winner is determined by what Shipp calls "unofficial subjective calibration." Shipp picks the winner.

The Most Unusual category was introduced in the middle eighties. Tony Stuardi, a marlin fisherman, caught on early. He went so far out in the Gulf—at least a hundred miles—that he laid up overnight. Most Unusual, he thought as he lay there, rising on the swells, and he got up and baited two bream hooks—ordinary small hooks of the sort more accustomed to dangling in a pond—and dropped them on a long line over the side. He was dropping them into DeSoto Canyon—two thousand feet of water, off the edge of the continental shelf. He caught a six-inch fanged mackerelet. By anyone's calibration, it was a clear winner. The next year, Stuardi came in with something equally odd, and Shipp again awarded him the prize. Then he told Stuardi that in years to come Stuardi could show up with anything from an oilfish to a bearded puffer but he was not going to win.

The blacktail moray lives so obscurely in deep water that it was not even described taxonomically until 1980, when it was known from only twenty-five specimens found in the world. Since then, however, six blacktail morays have appeared in the Alabama Deep Sea Fishing Rodeo, three of them this year. Shipp no longer thinks them unusual. Subjectively, they haven't got a prayer. He looks for "something never entered before, and if it's a legitimate catch we'll move it up to the top of the list." Three-two-one on his present list are Wendy Kennedy's short-fin mako shark, Don Henderson's smooth dogfish, and David Simms's blunt-nose jack—a fish that Shipp has never seen anywhere.



The geographical boundaries of the tournament were established after a competitor fished off Costa Rica and flew to Dauphin Island with the catch. Money may not have been the whole motivation. It is not always simple to fathom what makes a fisherman cheat. Why did Marcus Antonius, the Triumvir, cause dead lunkers to be draped on his hook so he could lift them from the water in the presence of Cleopatra? For the prestige? Did he actually think so little of her? According to Plutarch, she sent a servant swimming under Antony's boat with a dried, salted fish from the Black Sea. The servant put it on Antony's hook. When Antony pulled up the fish, he was drenched by all present with derisive laughter. "Imperator," she said, "you had better give up your rod."

The late Roy Martin, when he was the rodeo's judge, opened the stomach of a fish scoring high on the tournament scale. A chunk of lead fell out. That was not an isolated moment. Over the years, enough lead has been discovered in rodeo stomachs to suggest a new link in the food chain.

There were fishermen who came in every year with entries of frozen red snappers. And a clergyman in the tournament brought to the scale an amberjack that weighed ninety pounds. It was full of frozen blue runners—stuffed with frozen bait. In recent times, the tournament has acquired a Torrymeter, a machine that tests flesh to see if it has been frozen. "Electrodes pass current through a fish," Shipp explains. "If cells have been ruptured by freezing or deterioration, the current is stronger. A computer chip translates it to a number." The tournament has also introduced a polygraph. Competitors agree to its use when they buy their tickets. When the polygraph was first contemplated, a mailer was sent out asking if the competitors would approve. Eighty-five per cent said yes. In the first polygraph year, a winner failed the test miserably and was disqualified. He sued the Alabama Deep Sea Fishing Rodeo, but soon withdrew the suit. In the summary words of Bob Shipp, "He was a lyin' sumbitch and they got him."

As a Confederate cannon ends the tournament, spectators are ten deep straining to look into the fish bin. A woman leaning over a vermilion snapper is wearing a green bikini. Jingling in her navel on an extremely short gold chain is a green pendant scarab. She is not alone in her choice of wardrobe. All the way down the back wall of the bin are women leaning forward in bikinis, resting on the cinder block their soft-rayed pectoral fins. We have come here for purposes of comparative anatomy, and we're getting what we came for. I mean this as a compliment: these women are almost as good-looking as the fish. Before them on the ice are whitebone porgies, whitespotted soapfish, wahoos, black drums, gags, and snake eels. Striped burrfish. Gray triggerfish. Violet gobies. Rainbow runners. Bearded brotulas. Sailfish. Tarpon. Horse-eyed jacks. Literally, it's a ton of fish, and only a small fraction of all the competing fish not retained in the bin by the judges.

The rodeo has been criticized for killing so many fish, which is, among other reasons, why Willy is particularly welcome here. The aura of research tends to mute criticism. One of my sons-in-law is the skipper of a trawler in the Bering Sea. He fishes for cod, for Alaska walleye pollock. Both in metric tons and in numbers of fish, he will often catch in a single pass, in five minutes, the equivalent of all the fish caught in the Alabama Deep Sea Fishing Rodeo.

Willy is now lecturing the crowd on pelvic and pectoral fins. He is actually in the bin himself, standing, in his sandals, among the fish on the ice, because he knows that spectators will soon be taking the fish, and he is keeping an eye on specimens he has chosen for the lab. Pectoral fins, which spread to either side just below and behind the head, are for steering and braking, he says. The pelvic fins are anti-roll devices. Anti-roll devices on ships include stabilizers and flume tanks. Commercial fishing boats will extend their booms to both sides and lower into the water delta-shaped weights known as flopper-stoppers. Their flop-stopping ability may be considerable but cannot approach the efficacy of a pair of pelvic fins. Dorsal fins, in erection, supply some power and are helpful with anti-roll and steering, but more often they are social: they attract or repel other fish. The caudal fin—the tail fin—is for power. A tall, forked tail is for high speed. A squared tail is for easy going, moseying near the bottom.

A boy about four feet tall wants to know if he is as long as a king snake eel. Willy measures him with an eel. He is not.

A man in camouflage pants and a sleeveless red T-shirt reaches into the fish bin and picks up specimens one by one. He opens the mouth of each fish, looks down into it, and asks Willy what it is. "Almaco jack," Willy says. "*Seriola rivoliana*. Pretty unusual." This one? "Cubbyu. *Equetus umbrosus*." This one? "Tilefish. *Caulolatilus chrysops*. See how the teeth are angled backward? If the guy bites into food, it's not going to come out." In the mouth of the short-fin mako shark are two sets of teeth. "They are made to cut and then slice," Willy says. "Which is really cool." The sailfish, with that long hard bill, stuns prey by hitting it as if with a ball bat, which it does with a whip of the head. "Blacktail moray," Willy says, moving on. "*Gymnothorax kolpos*. '*Gymno*' means naked. It hasn't got any scales. You can look at it and right away make a lot of predictions based on its anatomy. That eel-like body can live in cracks and crevices. Those tubular nostrils allow him to sample water farther away than would otherwise be the case. There are no paired fins. They don't need anti-roll devices."

Back in the lab by 6 P.M., Willy works through the evening without dinner, putting off until midnight the cooking of fillets of dolphin and sailfish. In three days, he has collected fifty-two species and a hundred and fifteen specimens. Fifty of the smaller fish are on the table now. Where to start?

He picks up a five-inch tattler bass. It was caught on squid bait three hundred feet down. Coming up so fast caused its air bladder to move into its mouth like a cherry. "These are serranids," he says. "This family has interesting reproductive biology. Females reverse to males, and vice versa. In the spawning rush, one tattler will release an egg, another milt. Next time, each does the opposite. Sex reversal is not uncommon. Some fish are born alive, but not these."

He fillets a one-pound leopard toadfish. There's not a lot to cut. The toadfish is seventy-five-per-cent head. It looks like a boulder with a tail. Its flesh is pure white. "Which is what you would expect in a fish that does almost nothing but sit and wait for something to go by." It is doing less than that when it pursues an oyster. That bouldery head, with its small molarlike teeth, is a shell crusher. Willy removes the jaw muscles. They are the size and shape of two golf balls. "Are those the coolest jaw muscles you ever saw, or what?" he says. "But here's what's even more cool about this fish." He removes a diaphanous spheroid that looks very much like a calf testicle—a mountain oyster. It is the leopard toadfish's swim bladder, wrapped in a veneer of sonic muscle, which the toadfish vibrates to make sound. "Some fish produce sound for social communication," Willy says. "Some species make sounds with their fins, with their teeth, with their gill arches. This one does it with the swim bladder."

After three days and nights, Willy's body is hurting; his hands are puffy and sore. What drives him on is that everywhere he looks he sees another golden chance. He has worked in the Tana River, in Kenya; in the Brisbane River, in Australia; in the Comoro Islands, off East Africa; in the ponds of the Osage Catfisheries Company, in Osage Beach, Missouri, which are full of paddlefish, sturgeons, and gars. "It's an unparalleled opportunity," he says, once more sharpening his knife. "I couldn't collect like this anywhere in the world." ♦

TONGUE IN CHIC

"You rock!" is Sandra Bernhard's highest praise; and she does. Even as she parodied Joni Mitchell, Gladys Knight, and the artist formerly known as Prince, she managed to deliver some powerful versions of their songs while lacing her recent one-woman act, "I'm Still Here . . . Damn It!," with sardonic observations about the pop-record scene and anything else that insulted her spirit. Bernhard is an entrepreneur of irony who mocks even her own celebrity. On October 22nd (following a sold-out run Off Broadway last year and the birth of her baby), she comes to Broadway's Booth Theatre with the latest version of the show, an updated collection of her pungent digressions about the idiocy of our life and times.

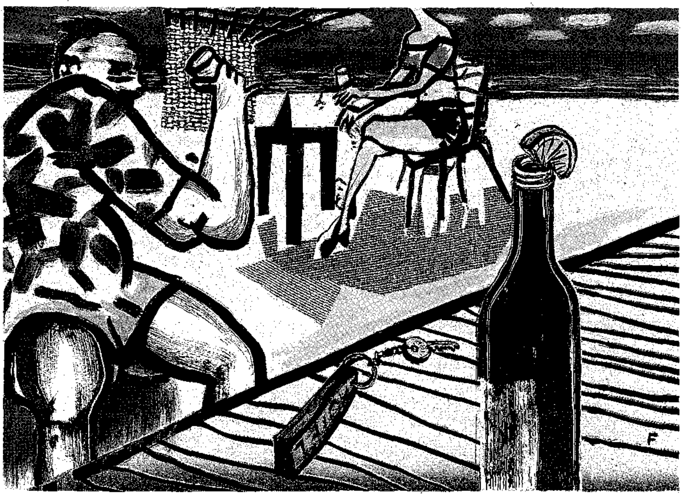
Photograph by Max Vadukul

FICTION

MEXICO

Anything was possible, especially down here.

BY T. CORAGHESSAN BOYLE



FILIP PAGOWSKI

HE didn't know much about Mexico, not really, if you discount the odd Margarita and a determined crawl through the pages of "Under the Volcano" in an alcoholic haze twenty years ago, but here he was, emerging pale and heavy from the sleek envelope of the airliner and into the fecund embrace of Puerto Escondido. All this—the scorching blacktop, the distant arc of the beach, the heat, the scent of the flowers and the jet fuel, and the faint lingering memory of yesterday's fish—was an accident. A happy accident. A charity thing at work—give five bucks to benefit the Battered Women's Shelter and win a free trip for two to the jewel of Oaxaca. Well, he'd won. And to save face and forestall questions he'd told everybody he was bringing his girlfriend along, for two weeks of R. and R.—Romance and Relaxation. He even invented a name for her—Yolanda—and yes, she was Mexican on her mother's side, gray eyes from her father, skin like burnished copper, and was she ever something in bed. . . .

There were no formalities at the airport—they'd taken care of all that in Mexico City with a series of impatient gestures and incomprehensible commands—and he went through the heavy glass doors with his carry-on bag and ducked into the first cab he saw. The driver greeted him in English, swivelling round to wipe an imaginary speck of dust from the seat with a faded pink handkerchief. He gave a little speech Lester couldn't follow, tossing each word up in the air as if it were a tight-stitched ball that had to be driven high over the fence, then shrank back into himself and said "Where to?" in a diminished voice. Lester gave the name of his hotel—the best one in town—and sat back to let the ripe breeze wash over his face.

He was sweating. Sweating because he was in some steaming thick tropical place and because he was overweight, grossly overweight, carrying fifty pounds too many and all of it concentrated in his gut. He was going to do something about that when he got back to San Francisco—join a club, start jogging, whatever—but right now he was just a big sweating overweight man with bare pale legs set like stanchions on the floor of the cab and a belly that soaked right through the front of his cotton-rayon, open-necked shirt with the blue and yellow parrots cavorting all over it. And there was the beach, scalloped and white, chasing along beside the car, with palm trees and a hint of maritime cool, and before ten minutes had ticked off his watch he was at the hotel, paying the driver from a wad of worn velvety bills that didn't seem quite real. The driver had no problem with them—the bills, that is—and he accepted a fat velvety tip, too, and seven and a half minutes after that Lester was sitting in the middle of a shady tiled dining room open to the sea on one side and the pool on the other, a room key in his pocket and his first Mexican cocktail clenched in his sweaty fist.

He'd negotiated the cocktail with the faintest glimmer of half-remembered high-school Spanish—jooze *naranja*, soda cloob and vodka, tall, with ice, *hielo*, yes, *hielo*—and a whole repertoire of mimicry he didn't know he possessed. What he'd really wanted was a Greyhound, but he didn't know the Spanish word for grapefruit, so he'd fallen back on the orange juice and vodka, though there'd been some confusion over the meaning of the venerable Russian term for clear distilled spirits until he hit on the inspiration of naming the brand, Smirnoff. The waitress, grinning and nodding while holding herself perfectly erect in her starched white peasant dress, repeated the brand name in a creaking singsong voice and went off to fetch his drink. Of course, by the time she set it down he'd already drunk the better half of it and he immediately ordered another and then another, until for the first twenty minutes or so he had the waitress and bartender working in perfect synchronization to combat his thirst and any real or imagined pangs he might have suffered on the long trip down.

After the fifth drink he began to feel settled, any anxiety over travelling dissolved in the sweet flow of alcohol and juice. He was pleased with himself. Here he was, in a foreign country, ordering cocktails like a native and contemplating a bite to eat—guacamole and nachos, maybe—and then a stroll on the beach and a nap before dinner. He wasn't sweating anymore. The waitress was his favorite person in the world, and the bartender came next.

He'd just drained his glass and turned to flag down the waitress—one more, he was thinking, and then maybe the nachos—when he noticed that the table at the far end of the veranda was occupied. A woman had slipped in while he was gazing out to sea, and she was seated facing him, bare-legged, in a rust-colored bikini and a loose black robe. She looked to be about thirty, slim, muscular, with a high tight chest and feathered hair that showed off her bloodshot eyes and the puffed bow of her mouth. There was a plate of something steaming at her elbow—fish, it looked like, the specialty of the house, breaded, grilled, stuffed, baked, fried, or sautéed with peppers, onion, and cilantro—and she was drinking a Margarita rocks. He watched in fascination—semi-drunken fascination—for a minute, until she looked up, chewing, and he turned away to stare out over the water as if he were just taking in the sights like any other calm and dignified tourist.

He was momentarily flustered when the waitress appeared to ask if he wanted another drink, but he let the alcohol sing in his veins and said, "Why not?"—"*Por qué no*?"—and the waitress giggled and walked off with her increasingly admirable rump moving at the center of that long white gown. When he stole another glance at the woman in the corner, she was still looking his way. He smiled. She smiled back. He turned away again and bided his time, but when his drink came he tossed some money on the table, rose massively from the chair, and tottered across the room.

"Hi," he said, looming over the chewing woman, the drink rigid in his hand, his teeth clenched round a defrosted smile. "I mean, *Buenas tardes*. Or *noches*."

He watched her face for a reaction, but she just stared at him.

"Uh, *Cómo está Usted*? Or *tú*. *Cómo estás tú*?"

"Sit down, why don't you," she said in a voice that was as American as Hillary Clinton's. "Take a load off."

Suddenly he felt dizzy. The drink in his hand had somehow concentrated itself till it was as dense as a meteorite. He pulled out a chair and sat heavily. "I thought . . . I thought you were—?"

"I'm Italian," she said. "From Buffalo, originally. All four of my grandparents came from Tuscany. That's where I get my exotic Latin looks." She let out a short bark of a laugh, forked up a slab of fish, and began chewing vigorously, all the while studying him out of eyes that were like scalpels.

He finished his drink in a gulp and looked over his shoulder for the waitress. "You want another one?" he asked, though he saw she hadn't half finished her first.

Still chewing, she smiled up at him. "Sure."

When the transaction was complete and the waitress had presented them with two fresh drinks, he thought to ask her name, but the silence had gone on too long, and when they both began to speak at the same time he deferred to her. "So what do you do for a living?" she asked.

"Biotech. I work for a company in the East Bay—Oakland, that is."

Her eyebrows lifted. "Really? Is that like making potatoes that walk around the kitchen and peel themselves? Cloning sheep? Two-headed dogs?"

Lester laughed. He was feeling good. Better than good. "Not exactly."

"My name's Gina," she said, reaching out her hand, "but you might know me as the Puma. Gina (the Puma) Caramella."

He took her hand, which was dry and small and nearly lost in his own. He was drunk, gloriously drunk, and so far he hadn't been ripped off by the Federales or assailed by the screaming shits or leached dry by malarial mosquitoes and vampire bats or any of the other myriad horrors he'd been warned against, and that made him feel pretty near invulnerable. "What do you mean? You're an actress?"

She gave a little laugh. "I wish." Ducking her head, she chased the remnants of the fish around the plate with her fork and the plane of her left index finger. "No," she said. "I'm a boxer."

The alcohol percolated through him. He wanted to laugh, but he fought down the urge. "A boxer? You don't mean like *boxing*, do you? Fisticuffs? Pugilism?"

"Twenty-three, two, and one," she said. She took a sip of her drink. Her eyes were bright. "What I'm doing right now is agonizing over my defeat two weeks ago at the Shrine by one of the queen bitches in the game, DeeDee DeCarlo, and my manager thought it would be nice for me to just get away for a bit, you know what I mean?"

He was electrified. He'd never met a female boxer before—didn't even know there was such a thing. Mud-wrestling he could see—in fact, since his wife had died he'd become a big fan, Tuesday nights and sometimes on Fridays—but boxing? That wasn't a woman's sport. Drunkenly, he scrutinized her face, and it was a good face, a pretty face, but for the bridge of her nose, a telltale depression there, just the faintest misalignment—and sure, sure, how had he missed it? "But doesn't it hurt? I mean, when you get punched in the . . . body punches, I mean?"

"In the tits?"

He just nodded.

"Sure it hurts, what do you think? But I wear a padded bra, wrap 'em up, pull 'em flat across the rib cage so my opponent won't have a clear target, but really, it's the abdominal blows that take it out of you," and she was demonstrating with her hands now, the naked slope of her belly and the slit of her navel, firm, but nothing like those freakish female bodybuilders they threw at you on ESPN, nice abs, nice navel, nice, nice, nice.

"You doing anything for dinner tonight?" he heard himself say.

She looked down at the denuded plate before her, nothing left but lettuce, don't eat the lettuce, never eat the lettuce, not in Mexico. She shrugged. "I guess I could. I guess in a couple hours."

He lifted the slab of his arm and consulted his watch with a frown of concentration. "Nine o'clock?"

She shrugged again. "Sure."

"By the way," he said. "I'm Lester."

APRIL had been dead two years now. She'd been struck and killed by a car a block from their apartment, and though the driver was a teen-age kid frozen behind the wheel of his father's Suburban, it wasn't entirely his fault. For one thing, April had stepped out in front of him, twenty feet from the crosswalk, and, as if that wasn't bad enough, she was blindfolded at the time. Blindfolded and feeling her way with one of those flexible fibreglass sticks the blind use to register the world at their feet. It was for a psychology course she was taking at San Francisco State—"Strategies of the Physically Challenged." The professor had asked for two volunteers to remain blindfolded for an entire week, even at night, even in bed, no cheating, and April had been the first to raise her hand. She and Lester had been married for two years at the time—his first, her second—and now she was two years dead.

Lester had always been a drinker, but

after April's death he seemed to enjoy drinking less and need it more. He knew it, and he fought it. Still, when he got back to his room, sailing on the high of his chance meeting with Gina—Gina the Puma—he couldn't help digging out the bottle of Herradura he'd bought in the duty-free and taking a good long cleansing hit.

There was no TV in the room, but the air-conditioner worked just fine and he stood in front of it awhile before stripping off his sodden shirt and stepping into the shower. The water was tepid, but it did him good. He shaved, brushed his teeth, and repositioned himself in front of the air-conditioner. When he saw the bottle standing there on the night table, he thought he'd have just one more hit—just one—because he didn't want to be utterly wasted when he took Gina the Puma out for dinner. But then he looked at his watch and saw that it was only seven-twenty, and figured what the hell, two drinks, three, he just wanted to have a good time. Too wired to sleep, he flung himself down on the bed like a big wet dripping fish and began poking through the yellowed paperback copy of "Under the Volcano" he'd brought along because he couldn't resist the symmetry of it. What else was he going to read in Mexico—Proust?

"*No se puede vivir sin amar*," he read, "You can't live without love," and he saw April stepping out into the street with her puny fibreglass stick and the black velvet sleep mask pulled tight over her eyes. But he didn't like that picture, not at all, so he took another drink and thought of Gina. He hadn't had a date in six months and he was ready. And who knew? Anything could happen. Especially on vacation. Especially down here. He tipped back the bottle, and then he flipped to the end of the book, where the Consul, cored and gutted and beyond all hope, tumbles dead down the ravine and they throw the bloated corpse of a dog down after him.

The first time Lester had read it, he'd thought it was funny, in a grim sort of way. But now he wasn't so sure.

GINA was waiting for him at the bar when he came down at quarter to nine. The place was lit with paper lanterns strung from the thatched ceiling, there was the hint of a breeze off the ocean, the sound of the surf, a smell of citrus and jasmine. All the tables were full, people leaning into the candlelight over their fish and Margaritas and murmuring to each other in Spanish, French, German. It was good. It was perfect. But as Lester ascended the ten steps from the patio and crossed the room to the bar, his legs felt dead, as if they'd been shot out from under him and then magically reattached, all in the space of an instant. Food. He needed food. Just a bite, that was all. For equilibrium.

"Hey," he said, nudging Gina with his shoulder.

"Hey," she said, flashing a smile. She was wearing shorts and heels and a blue halter top glistening with tiny blue beads.

He was amazed at how small she was—she couldn't have weighed more than a hundred pounds. April's size. April's size exactly.

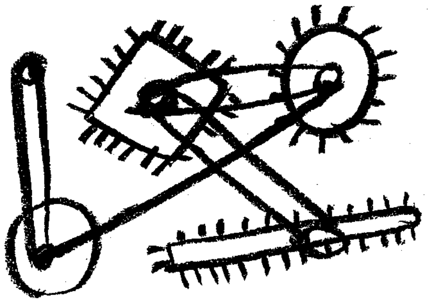
He ordered a Herradura-and-tonic, his forearms laid out like bricks on the bar. "You weren't kidding before," he said, turning to her, "about boxing, I mean? Don't take offense, but you're so—well, small. I was just wondering, you know?"

She looked at him a long moment, as if debating with herself. "I'm a flyweight, Les," she said finally. "I fight other flyweights, just like in the men's division, you know? This is how big God made me, but you come watch me some night and you'll see it's plenty big enough."

She wasn't smiling, and somewhere on the free-floating periphery of his mind he realized he'd made a blunder. "Yeah," he said, "of course. Of course you are. Listen, I didn't mean to—but why boxing? Of all the things a woman could do."

"What? You think men have a patent on aggression? Or excellence?" She let her eyes sail out over the room, hard eyes, angry eyes, and then she came back to him. "Look, you hungry or what?"

Lester swirled the ice in his drink. It was time to defuse the situation, but quick. "Hey," he said, smiling for all he was worth. "I'd like to tell you I'm on a diet, but I like eating too much for that—and plus, I haven't had a thing since that crap they gave us on the plane, dehydrated chicken and rice that tasted like some sort of by-product of the vulcanizing process. So yeah, let's go for it."



"There's a place up the beach," she said, "in town. I hear it's pretty good—Los Crotos. Want to try it?"

"Sure," he said, but the deadness crept back into his legs. Up the beach? In town? It was dark out there and he didn't speak the language.

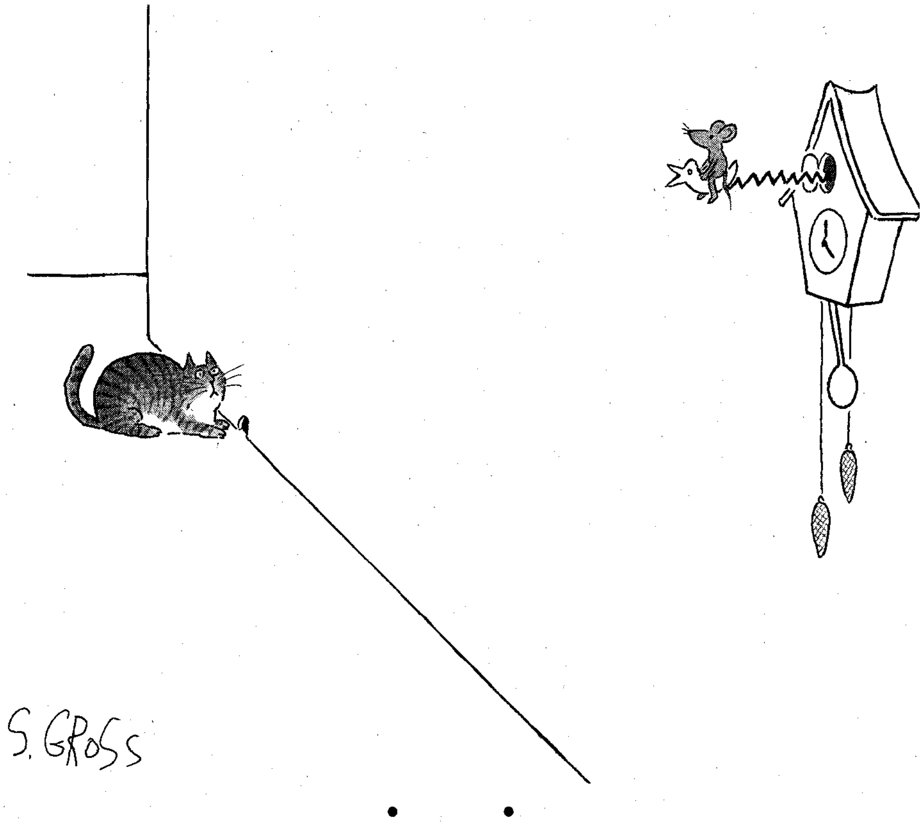
She was watching him. "If you don't want to, it's no big deal," she said, finishing off her drink and setting the glass down with a rattle of ice that sounded like nothing so much as loose teeth spat into a cup. "We can just eat here. The thing is, I've been here two days now and I'm a little bored with the menu—you know, fish, fish, and more fish. I was thinking maybe a steak would be nice."

"Sure," he said. "Sure, no problem."

And then they were out on the beach, Gina barefoot at his side, her heels swinging from one hand, purse from the other. The night was dense and sustaining, the lights muted, palms working slowly in the breeze, empty *palapas* lined along the high-water mark like the abandoned cities of a forgotten race. Lester shuffled through the deep sand, his outsized feet as awkward as snowshoes, while children and dogs chased each other up and down the beach in a blur of shadow against the white frill of the surf and knots of people stood in the deeper shadows of the palms, laughing and talking till the murmur of conversation was lost in the next sequence of breakers pounding the shore. He wanted to say something, anything, but his brain was impacted and he couldn't seem to think, so they walked in silence, taking it all in.

When they got to the restaurant—an open-air place set just off a shallow lagoon that smelled powerfully of seawrack and decay—he began to loosen up. There were tables draped in white cloth, the waiter was solicitous and grave and he accepted Lester's mangled Spanish with equanimity. Drinks appeared. Lester was in his element again. "So," he said, leaning into the table and trying to sound as casual as he could while Gina squeezed a wedge of lime into her drink and let her shoe dangle from one smooth slim foot, "you're not married, are you? I mean, I don't see a ring or anything. . . ."

Gina hunched her shoulders, took a



sip of her drink—they were both having top-shelf Margaritas, blended—and gazed out on the dark beach. "I used to be married to a total idiot," she said, "but that was a long time ago. My manager, Gerry O'Connell—he's Irish, you know?—him and me had a thing for a while, but I don't know anymore. I really don't." She focussed on him. "What about you?"

He told her he was a widower and watched her eyes snap to attention. Women loved to hear that—it got all their little wheels and ratchets turning—because it meant he wasn't damaged goods, like all the other hairy-chested cretins out there, but tragic, just tragic. She asked how it had happened, a sink of sympathy and morbid female curiosity, and he told her the story of the kid in the Suburban and the wet pavement and how the student volunteers were supposed to have a monitor with them at all times, but not April, because she just shrugged it off—she wanted an authentic experience, and that was what she got, all right. His throat seemed to thicken when he got to that part, the irony of it, and what with the cumulative weight of the cocktails, the reek of the lagoon, and the strangeness of the place—Mexico, his first day in Mexico—he nearly broke down. "I wasn't there for her," he said. "That's the bottom line. I wasn't there."

Gina was squeezing his hand. "You must have really loved her."

"Yeah," he said. "I did." And he had loved her, he was sure of it, though he had trouble picturing her now, her image drifting through his consciousness as if blown by a steady wind.

Another drink came. They ordered dinner, a respite from the intensity of what he was trying to convey, and then Gina told him her own tale of woe, the alcoholic mother, the brother shot in the face when he was mistaken for a gang member, how she'd excelled in high-school sports and had nowhere to go with it, two years at the community college and a succession of mind-numbing jobs till Gerry O'Connell plucked her from anonymity and made her into a fighter. "I want to be the best," she said. "Number One—and I won't settle for anything less."

"You're beautiful," he said.

She looked at him. Her drink was half gone. "I know," she said.

By the time they were finished with dinner and they'd had a couple of after-dinner drinks, he was feeling unbeatable again. It was quarter past eleven and the solicitous waiter wanted to go home. Lester wanted to go home, too—he wanted to take Gina up to his room and discover everything there was to know about her. He lurched suddenly to his feet and threw a fistful of money at the table. "Want to go?" he said, the words sticking to the roof of his mouth.

She rose unsteadily from her seat and leaned into him while she adjusted the strap of her right heel. "Think we should take a cab?" she said.

"A cab? We're just at the other end of the beach."

She was staring up at him, small as a child, her head thrown back to take in the spread and bulk of him. "Didn't you see that notice in your room—on the bathroom door? I mean, it sounds almost funny, the way they worded it, but still, I wonder."

"Notice? What notice?"

She fished around in her purse until she came up with a folded slip of paper. "Here," she said. "I wrote it down because it was so bizarre: 'The management regrets to inform you that the beach area is unsafe after dark because of certain criminal elements the local authorities are sadly unable to suppress and advises that all guests should take a taxi when returning from town.' "

"Are you kidding? Criminal elements? This place is a sleepy little village in the middle of nowhere—they ought to try the Tenderloin if they want to see criminal elements. And besides, besides"—he was losing his train of thought—"besides . . ."

"Yes?"

"There's nobody in the whole country taller than five-four, as far as I can see." He laughed. He couldn't help himself. "*Criminal elements!*" And he was still shaking his head as they stepped out into the night.

CALL it hubris.

They hadn't gone two hundred yards, the night deepening, dogs howling in the hills, and every star set firmly in its track, when they were jumped. It was nothing like the way Lester had visualized it while stalking home after the bars closed on Twenty-fourth Street, half hoping some sorry shithead would come up to him so he could break him in two. There were no words, no warning, no "Give me your wallet" or "I've got a gun" or "This is a stickup." One minute he was trudging through the sand, a drunken arm draped hopefully over Gina's shoulder, and the next he was on the ground, two pairs of booted feet lashing diligently at his face and ribs while a whole fluttering rush of activity washed round him, as if a flock of birds had burst up off the ground in a panic. He heard a grunt, a curse, the unmistakable crack of bone and cartilage rearranging itself, and it was Gina, Gina the Puma, whaling away at the shadows with both fists as he shoved himself up out of the sand and the boots suddenly stopped kicking and fled.

"You all right?" she said, and he could hear her hard steady breathing over the hammering of the waves.

He was cursing into the night—"Sons of bitches! Motherfuckers! I'll kill you!"—but it was all bluster, and he knew it. Worse, so did she.

"Yeah," he said finally, his chest heaving, the booze and adrenaline pulsing in his temples till the blood vessels there felt like big green garden hoses crawling up both sides of his head. "Yeah, I'm O.K. . . . I took a few kicks in the face maybe . . . and I think—I think they got my wallet. . . ."

"Here," she said, her voice oddly calm, "are you sure?" And then she was crouching, feeling around in the sand with spread fingers.

He joined her, glad to be down on his hands and knees and relieved of the effort of holding himself up. His wallet? He didn't give a shit about any wallet. The sand was cool, and the regular thump of the waves conveyed itself to him in the most immediate and prescient way.

"Les?" She was standing now, obscuring the stars. He couldn't make out her face. "You sure you're all right?"

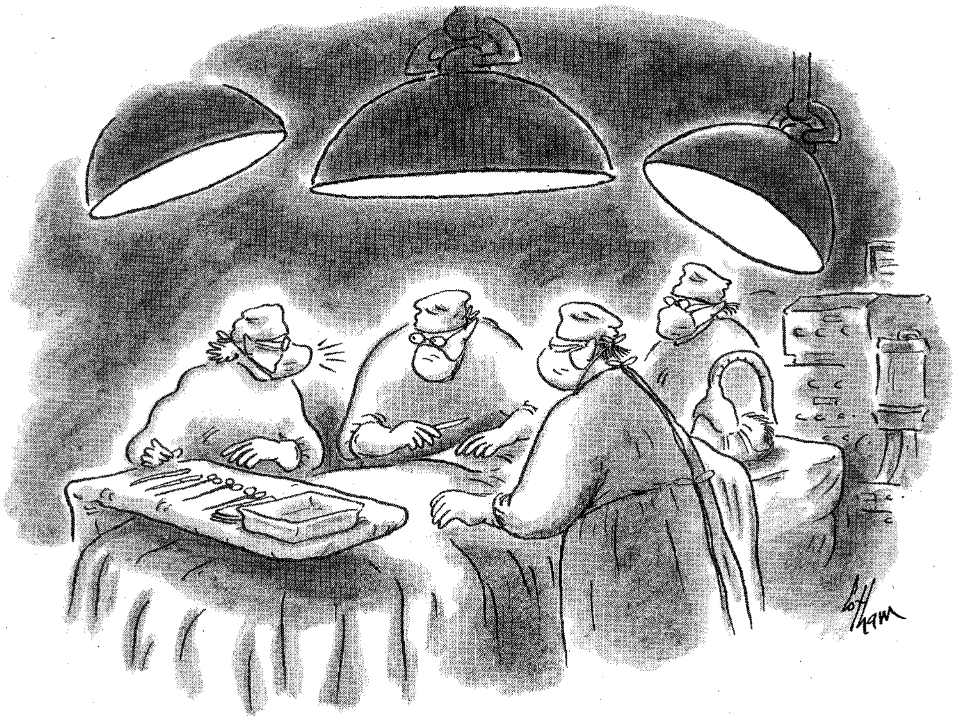
From a great reeling distance he heard himself say, "Yeah, I'm fine." Her voice was insistent, the voice of an intimate, a wife, a lover.

"Come on, Les, get up. You can't stay here. It's not safe."

"O.K.," he said. "Sure. Just give me a minute."

THEN there was a brightness, a burning-hot soldered light fused to the cracks of the blinds, and he woke to find himself in his bed—his Mexican bed, in his Mexican hotel, in Mexico. Alone. Without Gina, that is. The first thing he did was check his watch. There it was, clinging like a manacle to his wrist, dividing his naked forearm from his meaty pale hand and indifferently announcing the time: two-thirty-two. All right. He heaved himself up to a sitting position, drained the plastic water bottle he discovered behind the tequila on the night table, and took a minute to assess the situation.

There was a rumor of pain between his ribs, where, he began to recall, two pairs of sharp-toed boots had repeatedly inserted themselves in the waning hours of the previous night, but that was nothing compared with his face. It seemed to ache all over, from his hairline to his jaw. He reached a hand to his cheek and felt a tenderness there, and then he worked his jaw till the pain became too much for him. His right eye was swollen closed, there was a drumming in his head and a vague nauseous feeling creeping up the back of his throat. To top it off, his wallet was missing.



"Spare us the gory details."

Now he'd have to call up and cancel his credit cards, and he was a fool and an idiot and he cursed himself twice over, but it wasn't the end of the world—he had ten thin crisp hundreds hidden away in his carry-on bag, or his shaving kit, actually, where no one would think to look for them. It could have been worse, he was thinking, but he couldn't get much beyond that. How had he managed to get himself back last night? Or had Gina managed it? The thought made him burn with shame.

He took a shower, clapped on a pair of coruscating silver-lensed sunglasses to mask the desecration of his eye, and limped down to the restaurant. She wasn't there, and that was all right for the moment—he needed time to pull himself together before he could face her. The waitress was there, though, eternally responsive to his needs, wearing another down-to-the-toes peasant dress, this time in a shade of blue so pale it barely registered. She smiled and chirped at him and he ordered two tall Smirnoff-and-*naranja* with soda cloob and three fried eggs with tortillas and a fiery serrano salsa that cleared his airways, no doubt about it. He ate and drank steadily, and when he looked up idly at the sea stretching beyond the veranda, he saw nothing but a desert of water. He had a third cocktail for equilibrium, then went down to the front desk and asked the attendant there if she knew which room Gina was staying in.

"Gina?" the woman echoed, giving him a blank look. "What family name, please?"

He had no idea. She'd told him, but it was gone now, obliterated by vodka, tequila, and half a dozen kicks to the head. All he could think of was her professional name. "The Puma," he tried. "Gina the Puma."

The woman's hair was pulled back in a bun, her blouse buttoned up to her throat. She studied him a long moment. "I'm sorry," she said. "I can't help you."

"Gina," he repeated, and his voice got away from him a bit. "How many Ginas could there be in this place, for Christ's sake?"

When she answered this time, she spoke in Spanish, and then she turned away.

He began a methodical search of the place, from pool to bar and back again, suddenly desperate. He had to explain last night to Gina, joke it away, rationalize, apologize, spin shit into gold; she had to understand that he was drunk and his judgment was impaired, and if the circumstances had been different he would have wiped the beach with those scumbags, he would have. Startled faces gaped up at him from the recliners round the pool, maids in pale-green uniforms flattened themselves to the walls. Then he was in the blast of the midday sun, searching through the *palapas* on the beach, hundreds of *palapas,* and practically every one with a sunburned tourist lounging beneath it. Soon he was sunburned himself, sweating rivulets and breathing hard, so he stripped off his shirt, threw himself into the waves, and came up dripping to the nearest unoccupied *palapa* and sent a skinny little girl scurrying away to provide him with a piss-warm beer.

Several piss-warm beers later, he began to feel like himself again—and so what if he'd lost his shirt somewhere in the surf? He was in Mexico and he was drunk and he was going to find Gina and make it up to her, ask her to dinner, take a cab—a whole fleet of cabs—and buy her all the steak and lobster she could hold. He drank a tequila with wedges of lime and some true, cold beers at a tourist bar, and when the shadows began to lengthen he decided to continue up the beach to see if she'd maybe taken one of the water taxis over to Puerto Ángel or Carizalillo and was only now coming back.

The sun was hanging on a string just over the horizon, pink and lurid, and the tourists were busy packing up their sunblock and towels and paperback novels while the dark people, the ones who lived here year-round and didn't know what a vacation was, began to drift out of the trees with their children and their dogs to reclaim their turf. He kept walking, intent on the way his toes grabbed and released the sand, and he'd got halfway to the boats before he realized he'd left his sunglasses somewhere. No matter. He never even broke stride. They were nothing to him, one more possession, one more thing he could slough off like so much dead skin, like April's desk and her clothes and the straw baskets and pottery she'd decorated the apartment with. Besides, there was hardly any glare off the water now and these people, these coppery little grimacing Indians who seemed to sprout up all over the beach once the sun began to close down, they needed to see him, with his flaming belly and his crusted cheekbone and savage eye, because this was what their criminal elements had done to him and he was wearing the evidence of it like a badge. "Fuck you," he was muttering under his breath. "Fuck you all."

At some point, Lester looked up to orient himself and saw that he was just opposite the restaurant from last night. There it sat, squat among the trees, its lights reflected on the surface of the lagoon. A soft glow lit the bar, which he could just make out, figures there, movement, cocktail hour. He had a sudden intimation that Gina was in there, her dark head bent over a table in back, a drunken intimation that counted for absolutely nothing, but he acted on it, sloshing through the fetid lagoon in his sandals and shorts, mounting the three steps from the beach, and drifting across the creaking floorboards to the bar.

It wasn't Gina seated at the table but a local woman, the proprietress no doubt, totting up figures in a ledger; she raised her head when he walked in, but looked right through him. There were three men at the bar, some sort of police, in black shirts and trousers, one of them wearing dark glasses though there was no practical reason to at this hour. They ignored him and went on smoking and talking quietly, in soft rapping voices. A plastic half-gallon jug of tequila stood before them on the bar, amid a litter of plates and three water glasses half-full of silvery liquid. Lester addressed the bartender. "Margarita rocks," he said. "With *hielo.*"

He sipped his drink, profoundly drunk now, but drunk for a reason. Two

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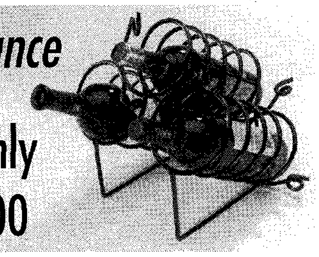

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reasons. Or three. For one thing, he had pain to kill, physical pain, and for another he was on vacation, and if you can’t be legitimately wasted on your vacation, then when can you be? The third reason was Gina. He’d come so close, and then he’d blown it. *Criminal elements.* He glanced up at the cops with an idle curiosity that turned sour almost immediately: Where were they when he’d needed them?

And then he noticed something that made his heart skip a beat: the boots. These guys were wearing boots, sharp-toed boots with silver toe caps, the only boots in town. Nobody in Puerto Escondido wore boots. They could barely afford sandals, fishermen who earned their living with a hook and thirty feet of line wrapped round an empty two-litre Pepsi bottle, maids and itinerant merchants, dirt farmers from the hills. Boots? They were as likely to have Armani blazers, silk shirts, and monogrammed boxer shorts. Understanding came down like a hammer. He had to find Gina.

Dusk now, children everywhere, dogs, fishermen up to their chests in the rolling water, bats swooping, sand fleas leaping away from the blind advance of his feet. The steady flow of alcohol had invigorated him—he was feeling no pain, none at all—though he realized he’d have to eat something soon, and clean himself up, especially if he was going to see Gina, because his whole body was seething and rushing, and everything, from the palms to the *palapas* to the rocks scattered along the shore, seemed to have grown fur. Or fuzz. Peach fuzz.

That was when he stepped in the hole and went down awkwardly on his right side, his face plowing a furrow in the loose sand, and the bad eye, wet with fluid, picking up a fine coating of sharp white granules. But it was no problem, no problem at all. He rolled over and lay on his back awhile, laughing softly to himself. *Criminal elements*, he thought, and he was speaking the thought aloud as people stepped around him in the sand. “Sure, sure. And I’m the Pope in Rome.”

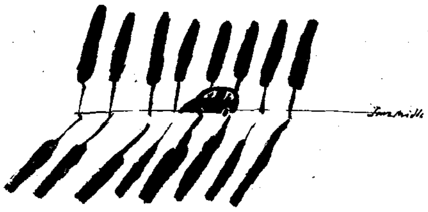
WHEN he finally got back to the hotel courtyard, he hesitated. Just stood there glistening in the muted light like a statue erected in honor of the befuddled tourist. On the one hand, he was struck by the impulse to go back to his room, wash the grit from his body, do something with his hair, and fish another shirt out of his bag; on the other, he felt an equally strong urge to poke his head in the bar for a minute—just a minute—to see if Gina was there. Ultimately, it was no contest. There he went, feet thundering on the planks, the sand sparkling all over him as if he’d been dipped in sugar.

There. There was the waitress, giving him an odd look—a blend of hopefulness and horror—and the thicket of heads bent over plates and glasses, the air heavy as water, the bartender looking up sharply. Ever hopeful, Lester lurched out onto the floor.

This time he got lucky: Gina was sitting at a table just round the corner of the bar, the farthest table out on the veranda, her legs crossed at the knee, one shoe dangling from her toes. There was music playing somewhere, a faint hum of it leaking in out of the night, Mexican music, shot full of saccharine trumpets and weeping violins. It was a romantic moment, or it could have been. But Gina didn’t see him coming—she was turned the other way, in profile, the sea crashing behind her, her hair hanging limp to her shoulders—and it wasn’t till he’d rounded the end of the bar that he saw she wasn’t alone. There was a man sitting across from her, a drink in one hand, cigarette in the other. Lester saw a dangle of red hair, muscles under a Lollapalooza T-shirt, the narrow face of an insect.

In the next instant he loomed up on the table, pulled out a chair, and dropped into it with a thump that reverberated the length of the dining room. “Gina, listen,” he said, as if they were right in the middle of a conversation and the man with the insect face didn’t exist, “about last night, and you’re not going to believe this, but it was—”

And then he faltered. Gina’s mouth was hanging open—and this was a mouth that could cushion any blow, a mouth that knew the taste of leather and the shock of the punch that came out of nowhere. “Christ, Les,” she said. “What happened to you—you’re a mess. Have you looked in the mirror?”



He watched her exchange a glance with the man across the table, and then he was talking again, trying to get it out, the night, the way they’d come at him, and they weren’t just your average muggers, they were the law, for Christ’s sake, and how could anybody expect him to defend her from that?

“Les,” she was saying. “Les, I think you’ve had too much to drink.”

“I’m trying to tell you something,” he said, and his own voice sounded strange to him, distant and whining, the voice of a loser, a fat man, a maker of bad guesses and worse decisions.

That was when the red-haired man spoke up, his eyes twitching in his head. “Who is this jerk anyway?”

Gina—Gina the Puma—gave him a look that was like a left jab. “Shut up, Drew,” she said. And then, turning back to Lester, “Les, this is Drew.” She tried to inject a little air into her voice, though he could see she wasn’t up to it. “Drew wants to know where he can get a good steak around here.”

Drew slouched in his chair. He had nothing to say. Lester looked from Gina to Drew and back again. He was very far gone, he knew that, but still, even through his haze, he was beginning to see something in those two faces that shut him out, that slammed the door with a bang and turned the key in the lock.

He had no right to Gina or this table or this hotel, either. He couldn’t even make it through the first round.

Gina’s voice came to him as if from a great distance—“Les, really, maybe you ought to go and lie down for a while”—and then he was on his feet. He didn’t say “Yes” or “No” or even “See you later”—he just turned away from the table, wove his way through the restaurant, down the stairs, and back out into the night.

It was fully dark now, black dark, and the shadows had settled under the skeletons of the trees. He wasn’t thinking about Gina or Drew or even April and the kid in the Suburban. There was no justice, no revenge, no reason—there was just this, just the beach and the night and the criminal elements. And when he got to the place by the lagoon and the stink of decay rose to his nostrils, he went straight for the blackest clot of shadow and the rasping murmur at the center of it. “You!” he shouted, all the air raging in his lungs. “Hey, you!” ♦

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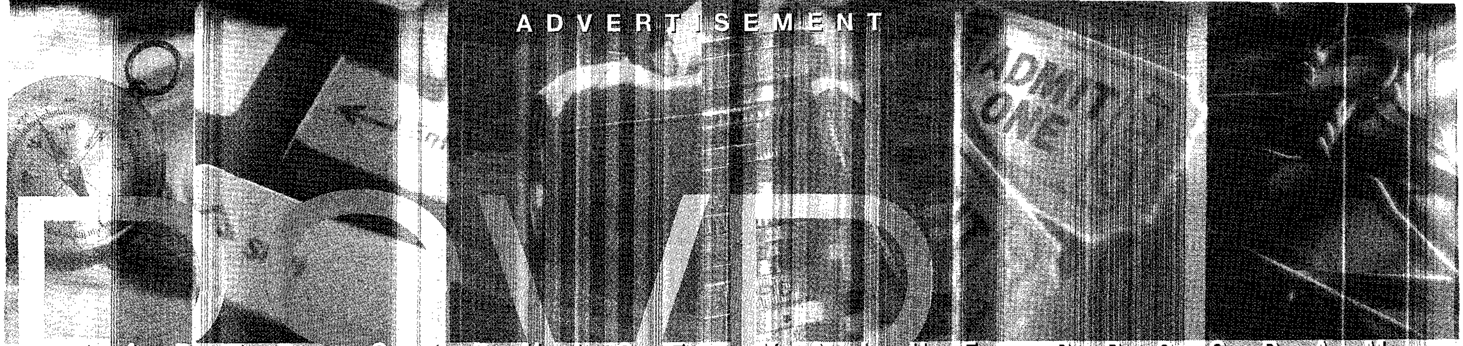

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THE ART WORLD

POURED OVER

Jackson Pollock and the studied art of spontaneity.

BY ADAM GOPNIK

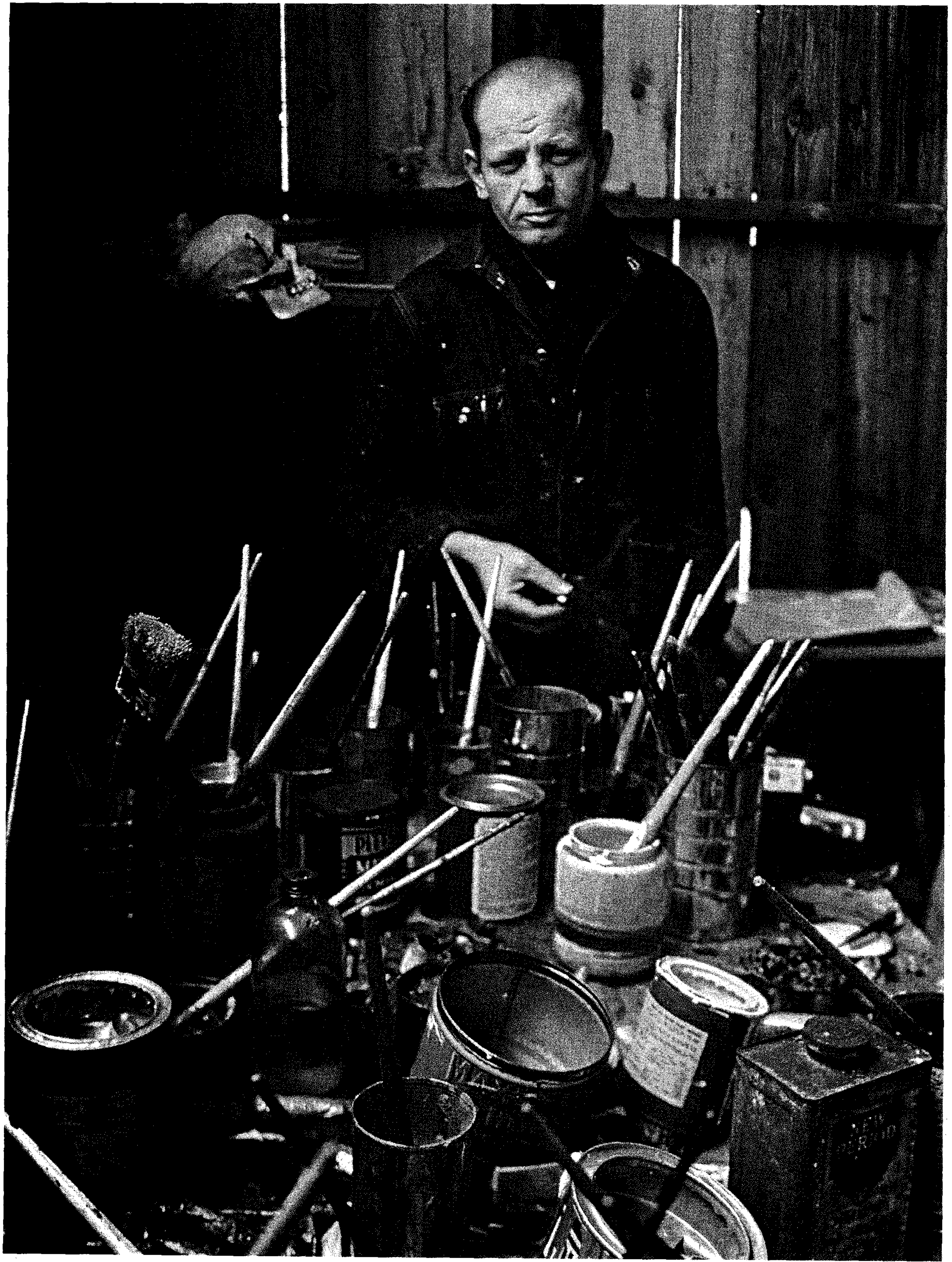
Jackson Pollock is the big guy in the middle, the one around whom everything else revolves. Before he laid his canvases flat on the ground and began to pour aluminum and enamel paint on them, out in an East Hampton hovel in the summer of 1947, American art, no matter how inspired or eccentric, was open to the reproach of provincialism. After him, it wasn't—not because the province had won over the capital but because it had created a taste so original that it made the old capitals look provincial. Forty-two years after his death, in a car crash a few miles from that studio, his ghost is still standing in the paint, feeding everyone from Richard Serra to Frank Stella. Pollock's achievement was so large that it was almost instantly recognized even by people who didn't much like it and had no particular interest in promoting it. Kenneth Clark, Mr. Civilisation himself, who had a very limited taste for abstract painting, saw the first Pollock show in Europe, in Venice in 1948, and understood that here was "the archetypal American painter, as Whitman is the archetypal American poet."

Yet if Pollock's achievement is Whitman-like in scale, in style it resembles that of Brando or even James Dean—the intuitive genius who breaks through to a new style of direct expression, free of conventional rhetorical mannerisms, and then finds himself trapped in the manner he created. Of all the makers of American art—Motherwell, Greenberg, Rosenberg, de Kooning—Pollock was by far the most truly provincial: inarticulate, hard-drinking, coarse not just in manner, though he was often that, but in feeling, too. Praise for Pollock's intuitive genius can easily be turned into the classic complaint against the romantic artist, or, for that matter, into the classic complaint against the big man in the middle: he just stands there, doing what comes naturally, diminishing the game even as he dominates it.

This tension has produced an academic argument that keeps changing contestants and particulars but remains essentially the same. Either Pollock was deeper than he seemed, and the pictures are more composed and conventionally "meaningful" than they look, or the whole point of the pictures, as Harold Rosenberg argued once and Rosalind Krauss argues today, was to achieve a kind of "anti-art," to launch a deliberate, subversive assault on mere picturemaking. Is Pollock an optical painter, a painter of pleasure, tied to Watteau or even Tiepolo: a structured classicist, however eccentric his language? Or is he a modernist in another, harder sense: a painter of abject effects, deliberately filling his pictures with what looks like urine and semen in an act of contempt for conventional aestheticism? Is he floating on a lily pad with Monet or pissing on his audience, like Lenny Bruce? If Pollock is the archetypal American painter—and few people would dispute it—then what does that say about America, its painting, and its archetypes?

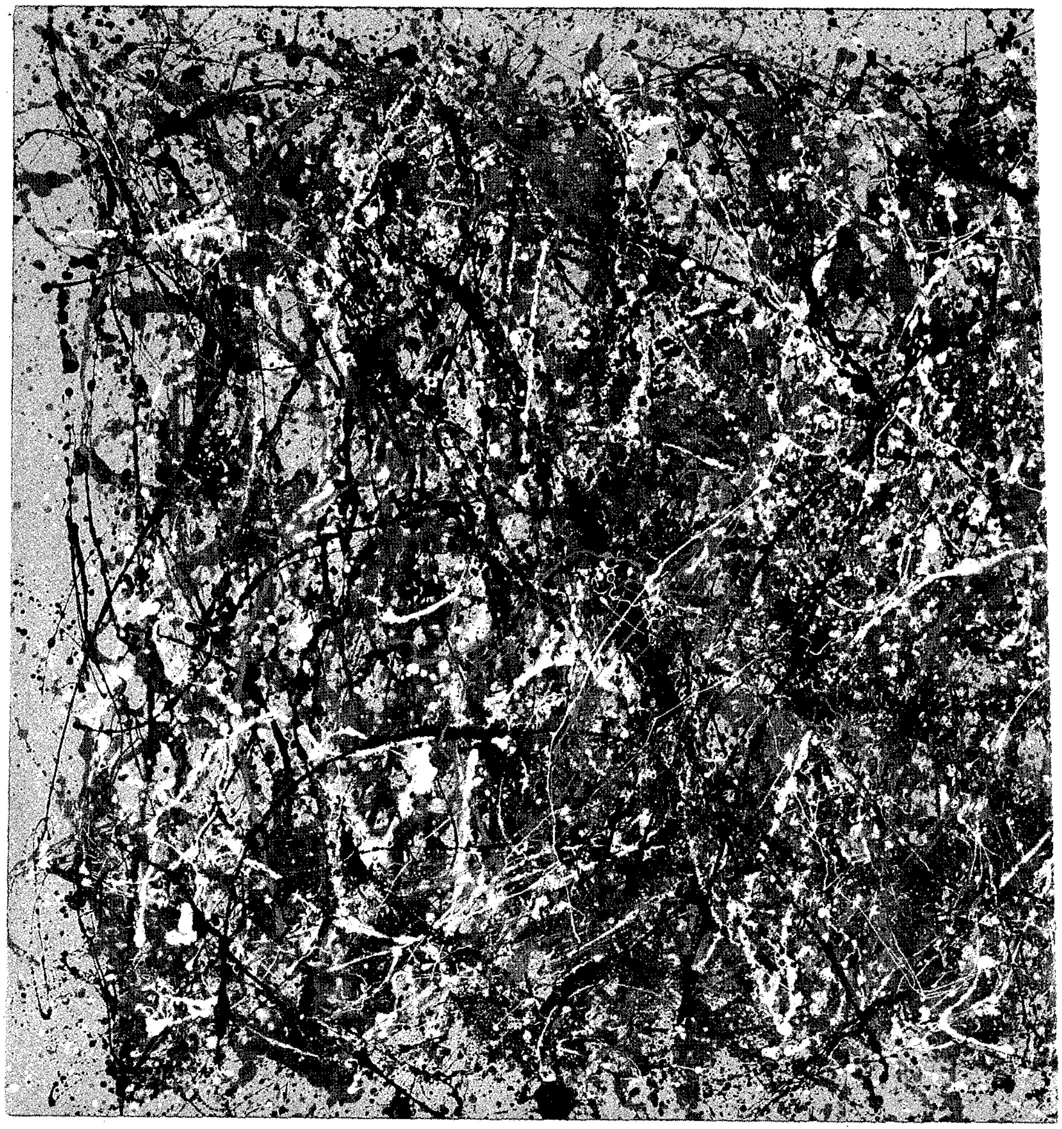
On November 1st, the Museum of Modern Art will mount the first full-dress, all-inclusive retrospective that Pollock has ever had. The show has been prepared by Kirk Varnedoe and Pepe Karmel (both old colleagues of mine at the Institute of Fine Arts), and the material that accompanies the exhibition offers, in classic MOMA fashion, a galaxy of new facts. Among other things, we know now that Pollock, who has a reputation as a mad jazz fan and a master of visual bebop, in fact liked only old swing music. The one time Pollock heard Parker, he asked his lover to take the damn record off, because it sounded like a mess. The jazz he made his paintings to, which you can hear on a CD that goes along with the exhibition, was the jazz of Armstrong and Holiday and even Fats Waller; if there's an American beat in there, it's a snappy four-four, set by Count Basie. Varnedoe and Karmel have also arrived at a new understanding of what the poured technique was actually like, and of the variety of effects that it could produce. It is conventional to say that Pollock's poured paint was a way of getting long, looping drawing, of liberating graphic line from the job of describing objects, but, as Varnedoe writes, just using the word "line" in connection with Pollock's poured paintings "levels the variations," which include "splotches, blobs, pointillist spatters, and droplet spots that sometimes trail and other times under- or overlay the webs, combs, nests, dendrites, and nebulae that the line clusters conjure." A full, formal description of Pollock's technique would demand as many words for "line" as the Eskimos are said to have for snow.

There is, in other words, not just a lot we don't know but a lot we think we know that just isn't so, beginning with what we think we know about his origins. Everyone who knows anything about Jackson Pollock knows that he was a Western artist, a Wyoming artist, a "cowboy" artist, who spent his childhood immersed in Indian lore—he always credited the Navajo sand painters with being a crucial influence—among the vast desert horizons that haunt his work. In fact, although Pollock was born in Cody, Wyoming—a cheap, Lake Enchanto-style development begun by Buffalo Bill—he was out of there before he was a year old. The family moved around California, ending up in Riverside, east of Los Angeles; he started high school there, and then went to Manual Arts, in L.A. (He saw those Navajo shamans as a grown man, in the garden of the Museum of Modern Art.) So he wasn't a "Western" artist at all. He was a California artist, as California as John Steinbeck or M. F. K. Fisher—that is, California through and through, but not in the way you'd necessarily first think of as



Pollock in his East Hampton studio in 1949. He would soon be the most famous artist in America. Photograph by Arnold Newman.

California. The Southern California sun stayed in his eyes; a Pollock like the sublime "Number 1, 1949," which happens to live in L.A., at the Museum of Contemporary Art, is, with its white maze of arabesques, its hot pinks and greens, its sheer, overlighted dazzle, as California as a Thiebaud cake. More important, he got the vital California sense of permission—which precedes even the California sense of light—early, and he kept it. He was a native of the land of the spiritual shortcut—almost the first thing we know about him as a teenager was his enthusiasm for Theosophy and Krishnamurti—and shared its belief that, once you find the right engine, you can get back to Eden in half an hour. (And, in a way, he did.)



"One: Number 31, 1950." The best of Pollock's poured pictures are made up of dots as much as

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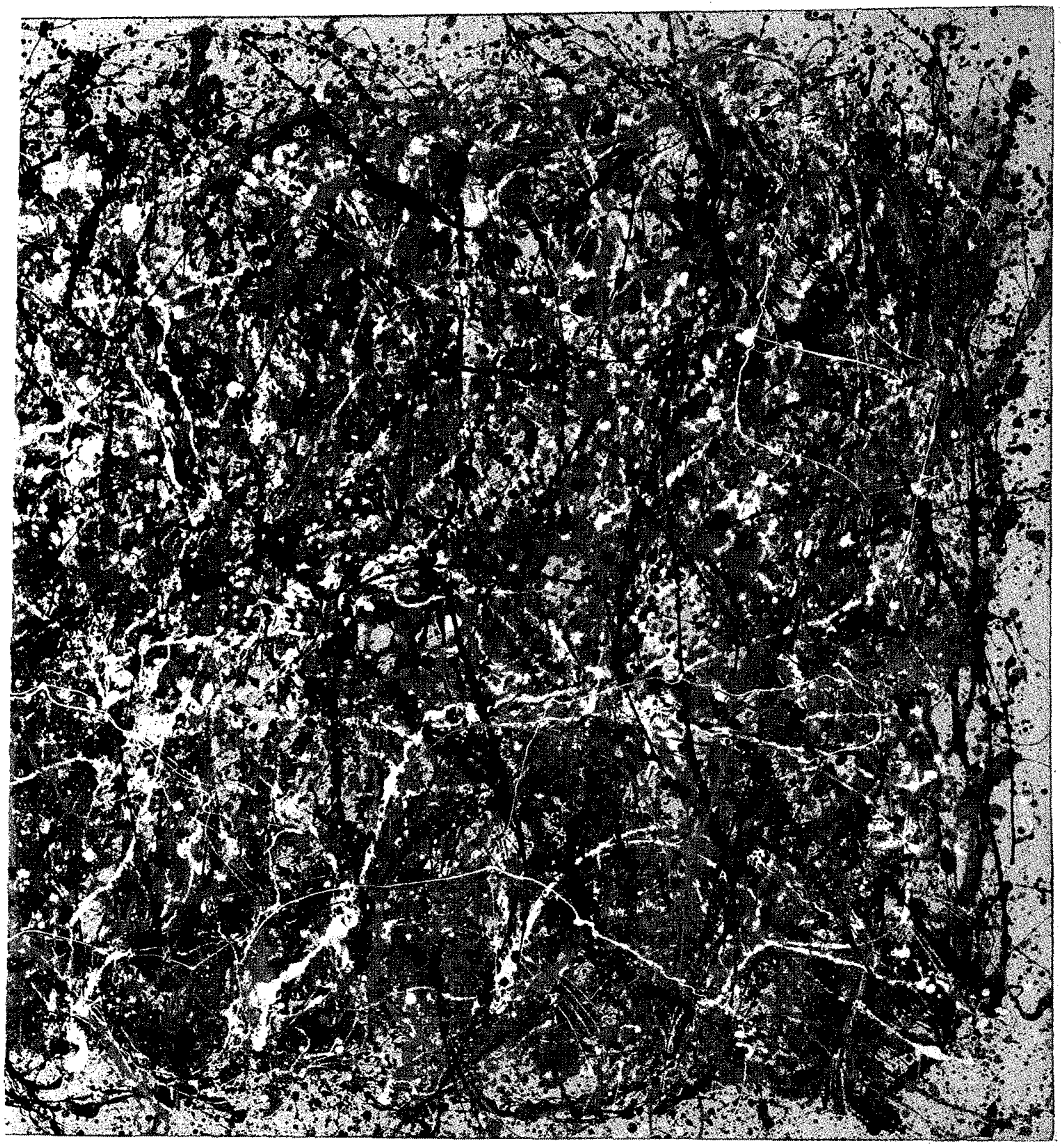
POLLOCK'S father was a drunk and a ne'er-do-well, and his mother seems to have been invisible, and so he was reared by his four older brothers. Although the five grew up in sun-bleached Steinbeckian squalor, three of them dreamed of becoming artists—painters. It isn't clear that they knew, exactly, what an artist does; but they knew that they wanted to be what an artist is. One feels that for the Pollock boys being an artist meant Anywhere But Here and Anything But This. Yet there was a kind of important permission, too, in that ignorance. New York kids of the same period, a Rothko, a Newman, knew what they were going up against, and their work kept traces of stagefright well into their forties. For a California kid in those pre-Getty days, art meant That Big Thing You Don't Find Around Here—let's do it.

In Jackson's case, his vocation didn't just come before his knowledge; it preceded any special talent. No more ham-handed and unnatural draftsman has ever turned into a major artist. The first gift that became apparent when he arrived in New York, in 1930—apart from his gift as a barfly, which was already evident—was a gift as a professional protégé. Older men, in particular, were somehow glad to take him under their wing. To list the names of some of his mentors and therapists is to feel some of the comedy, during that period, of American aspiration toward Europe (where Pollock never travelled): Frederic John de St. Vrain Schwankovsky, Violet Staub de Laszlo, Ivan Gratianovitch Dombrowsky (known as John Graham).

Above all, though, there was Thomas Hart Benton, who became Pollock's most important mentor and teacher. Benton was famous as the Kansas City Tintoretto—a regional muralist who had turned the art of Rubens and El Greco and Tintoretto into what Varnedoe calls a serpentine secular Mannerism, which remained the basis of Pollock's grown-up work. He taught a method of reducing Renaissance compositions into arcs and bars and stick figures—of reducing the figure to an underlying pattern of energy. Looking at his murals, one sees that, though Pollock discarded the Rodgers-and-Hammerstein imagery (pickup trucks and winding rural roads and sexy State Fair girls in starched gingham dresses), Benton's manner got right into his hand, where it mattered.

All abstraction has to start somewhere, and it usually starts with a vocabulary of shapes that the artist learned before he began thinking about what he was doing. Willem de Kooning's mother tongue, for instance, was life drawing, and even his most extreme painting was built out of the classical armatures by which centuries of European painters had been taught to reduce a human body to a tactile stenography of shaded twists. Pollock's mother tongue, learned with Benton, was not classical but Mannerist, human action reduced to hooks and scrawls of labile movement. He was an immaterial painter from the beginning: bodies dissolve right out of his work without an effort; and though drawing would come back, figures never really did. This is what set him apart most decisively from his contemporaries. Almost every other American abstract artist of the period worked with some kind of analogue to the human figure—de Kooning with the shorthand life drawing, Motherwell with solemn, Giottesque blocks, Kline with dancing calligraphy. Pollock was a kind of matchbook Midas: everybody he drew turned to flames.



nes. The speckled, atomized Pointillist surface of spattered paint shimmers beneath the tendrils.

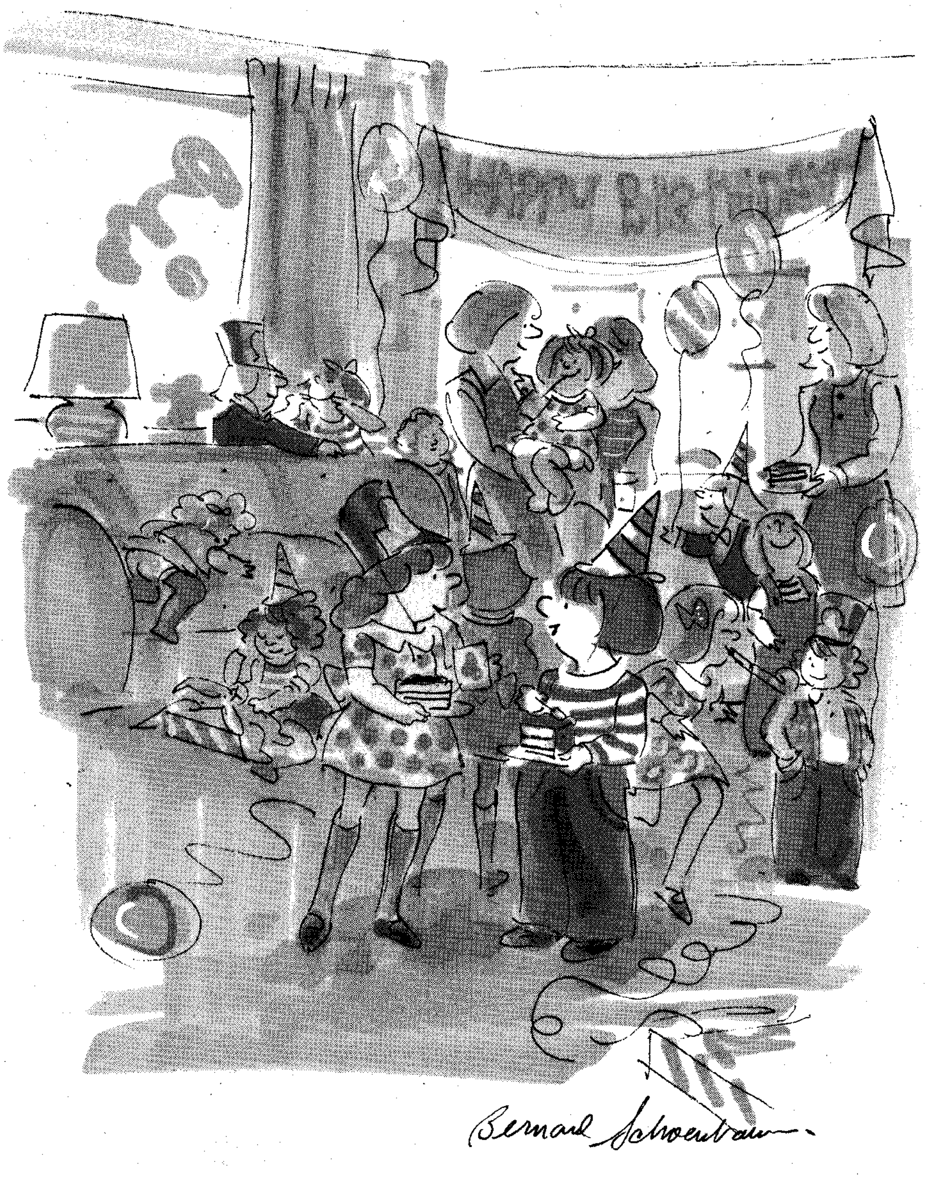
WHEN Pollock got out on his own, leaving Benton's shadow, the pictures were still pretty bad. Remarkably, he was recognized as Pollock early, long before he was doing much that looked recognizably like himself. It is hard now to see just what it was about the Pollock paintings of the early forties that thrilled judges as intelligent and independent-minded as Clement Greenberg and Mondrian. "The She-Wolf," "Guardians of the Secret," "Night Mist," "Gothic," and "Troubled Queen"—the wooga-booga titles give away the overwrought, nocturnal misterioso effect. Ovoid Gothic women preside over a darkling world of wolves and carved totems and Northwest Coast Indian masks, the pet Surrealist figures of the Museum of Modern Art sent dutifully on a class trip to the Museum of Natural History with their lunches packed. And yet there was something there, if no more than a willingness to look gauche, a saving disdain for conventional tastefulness. Greenberg hailed him as the best American painter when he was still producing pictures that looked like moody Picasso paraphrases.

In 1945, Lee Krasner, who had just become Pollock's wife, encouraged him to move away from the Village bars and out to East Hampton, and there he became himself. He gave up the heavy-handed "primitive" symbolism and, perhaps more important, the thick dark outlines that he believed were inseparable from high Surrealist seriousness. His painting became freer, and crucially lighter in key: the dark outlines were replaced, as in "Croaking Movement," with a crisscross pattern of white lines, like canals on Mars. Then, in the summer of 1947, he put the canvases on the floor of his shed and began to address them from on high. By autumn, American art had changed. There were, of course, many precedents in modern and, particularly, Surrealist art for "automatic" drawing and painting. But the Surrealists were trying to coax an unconscious image out of an accident, and Pollock made the accident all the image he needed.

Of these pictures, and the still better poured pictures that he produced over the next three years, it is difficult to speak evenly or, at times, sensibly. (The only thing I know that is comparable for excitement, emotional effect, and the curiously quick fade is fireworks over water—and then the fireworks have to be great and the water wide.) Begin with the technique, though, which (as Varnedoe and Karmel note) turns out to be far more complicated than it looks. Legend has it that the act of pouring was what produced the endless flowing, vitalistic lines of his work; conventional painting merely acted as background. In fact, computer modelling reveals (as a little careful thought would have long ago made one realize) that the poured paint produced the splodgy puddled bits in the background, while the kinetic, spooling lines had to be carefully drawn in with a hardened brush or a stick—the animated performance produced visual stasis, while the energy had to be nursed into being over time.

Pollock was never merely intuitive, and he was no Mr. Natural. It was exactly the gnarled, troubled syntax of Mannerist anxiety underlying his work which gave it its vital tension. But there is no denying the breath of released emotion that blows through pictures like "Number 20, 1948" and the 1947 "Alchemy." These are immense pictures—"Alchemy" is seven feet long—whose surfaces dance and gyrate and slash, with the scratched black now the background for the white and yellow to glow in, like a summer night. The titles alone are indicative: "Alchemy," "Phosphorescence," "White Light." People talk about these pictures as though they were made of webs and overlays of lines, but the best of the poured pictures are made up of dots as much as of lines. How atmospheric they really are: the speckled, atomized Pointillist surface of spattered paint shimmers beneath the tendrils.

Pollock was asked once if he imitated nature, and he replied, "I am nature." Nature is various, though, and the nature that Pollock most closely resembles is not the ordered, driven, purposeful nature of biological form but the nature where momentary order is produced by the dialogue between chance events and ordinary material, the randomly generated nature of waves and winds and clouds. Pollock's poured pictures are ordered the way dunes and waterfalls are ordered, the way a fire in the fireplace is ordered.



"I'm registered with Toys R Us and F.A.O. Schwarz."

They are also natural the way natural functions are natural. The "optical," or over-aestheticized, account of the pictures, descending from Clement Greenberg, underrates their wildness, their spurting disdain for ordinary painterly decorum. But not every liberty need be assaultive, and not every regressive pleasure need be abject. Lurking in accounts like Rosalind Krauss's Surrealist praise of Pollock's art as "abject" is the lingering Puritan belief that the acts of the body are dark and dirty. It is an odd prejudice to think that everything below the belt is somehow shameful and "transgressive." (A little kid whizzing in the snow doesn't think for a moment that what's he done is "abject"; he thinks, precisely, that it's aesthetic.)

By the late summer of 1950, when Pollock produced his two greatest pictures—the National Gallery's "Lavender Mist" and MOMA's seventeen-and-a-half-foot-long "One: Number 31, 1950"—he was making art that was at once as obvious as a child's scribbles and as sublime as an astronomer's photograph of a far-off nebula. These two paintings were the first avant-garde modernist works that people mostly loved the first time they saw them. This sounds weird; an aura of difficulty clings to Pollock's reputation. But Varnedoe makes it plain that the historical record is unambiguous. Pollock met with essentially no resistance; even people who did not like the paintings (Clark, for instance, and, soon afterward, Leo Steinberg), or thought that they were in some way "barbaric," recognized their importance. In the summer of 1949, Pollock had been in *Life*, which asked the question "Is he the greatest living painter in the United States?," and, though the answer was tinged with irony, it was hardly a simple "No." (The editor who commissioned the piece bought a picture.) Pollock appeared in *Life* in the faux-prole uniform of jeans and open shirt and Salvation Army overcoat which would remain the New York avant-garde painter's uniform until the mid-eighties. Over the next few years, that image helped Pollock become the most famous artist in America—perhaps, after Picasso, the most famous artist in the world. He was argued over, documented, photographed, mythologized.

In the argument about Pollock that began in those years one senses the classic American tension between extreme libertarianism and radical Puritanism. On the one hand, the freedom with which Pollock just went for it, slashing through the knot, was the source of his immediate ascension as a cultural hero. On the other hand, no one was content to let what he did be what it seemed to be—a way of going on without a fixed intention—and the Puritan imagination rushed in to declare that there was a point in there someplace. "They've no business to exist unless they mean something," Henry Adams wrote of Samoan rituals, anticipating Pollock's critics. "And they won't let me know what they mean. One cannot live permanently on purple mist and soufflé." Pollock showed that you could.

POLLOCK had an original way of making that preceded any kind of settled meaning. Not surprisingly, therefore—and, inevitably, one thinks again of Method actors—feelings of fraudulence began to battle in the painter's heart with feelings of worth and accomplishment. "It's not what you imagine," Pollock must have wanted to say, "not some consequence of mysterious craft or esoteric intelligence or a philosophical reading of history. It's just this thing I do." The problem for the American artist who is just doing this thing is that pretty soon it can seem as if the thing were just doing you. Then trouble starts, and it did for Pollock.

In the early fifties, he gave up pouring, and began to paint new, more obviously imagelike pictures. Much more graphic than the forties pictures, they can occasionally offer, as in "Number 1, 1952," a quick excitement, like Matisse's cutouts of the same period. But for the most part they are sad: busy, overworked pieces of "calligraphic" design that look as period as bullfight posters and Chianti flasks. In place of the mists and nebulae of the poured pictures, we get black-and-white drawings of imaginary Chinese landscapes. Repeated attempts have been made to dignify these pictures by maintaining that they represent a vital return to the figure. And someone is bound to say that they point in a prescient direction. But what they point to is the worst of contemporary painting: the mindless hyped-up neo-expressionism of Anselm Kiefer or Georg Baselitz, or, at best, the decorative calligraphy of Brice Marden.

Throughout the glory years, Pollock had been on the wagon, give or take a couple of quick falls and remounts. Then, at Thanksgiving in 1956, the photographer Hans Namuth, who had been responsible for the famous series of melodramatic photographs that, published in *Artnews*, sealed Pollock's reputation as an Action painter, arrived to film Pollock at work. In the chilly weather, Pollock found himself performing a version of his own performance—he became an actor playing himself. That night, he began to mutter about being "phony" and drained a bottle of whiskey by himself. He never really dried out, or recovered, and the path—truly an expense of spirit in a waste of shame—that led to Fireplace Road and the fatal accident was set.

And if he had gone on? Shut your eyes, and it isn't too hard to see the later career: the "White Cross" series ("where the familiar Pollockian web of paint is anchored by a strong central image"); the "Return to Color" of the early sixties; the geometric pictures of the mid-sixties. And then on to death and the big, studio-clearing East Hampton shed sales of the late seventies—or perhaps, instead, a late-late, or pickled-brain, period, where a few scrawls would make the more doggedly ingenuous among us rise to wide-eyed adjectives. Some minor mystifications and many major sales.

These are the materials of a typical American pop martyrology, but is that really surprising? Pollock's art has not been made hostage to a pop story. His *was* a pop story, with pop shapes and pop triumphs. The form and nature of his accomplishment feel closer to the world of Brando and Dylan (and Salinger and Kerouac) than to that of Wallace Stevens and de Kooning and Balanchine. In a country where the role of the artist is a vague one, ambitious American artists have all along sought out other, more secure, social roles as cover. So, just as Audubon was, crucially, a salesman, and Winslow Homer a soldier right up to the Cincinnatus-style retreat, Pollock came to inhabit the role of the star. (Warhol was not a star but the thing that came after, the stargazer, the *poète maudit* of celebrity journalism.) Though the pop artists were supposed to be in rebellion against what Pollock represented, they are, as figures, far less pop. When Warhol appears in movies, he is evil or, at best, absurd; the Pollock movie will be "epic," with Ed Harris in the lead. The elements of his achievement—the sudden discovery of a hypnotically direct voice, the shrewd self-presentation, the metastasizing cult, the inability to go forward, the compression of the genius into a short period of stardom—are all familiar now (as in Pollock's lifetime they were only beginning to be) as the inevitable shape of American pop achievement. Pollock shows us the best of that kind of achievement: the ability to turn a device that seems maddeningly small from the point of view of classical civilization—poured paint, scratch and mumble performing, a doggerel rhyme—into an art that continues to resonate in the world's imagination.

If Pollock is weak where pop is weak, he is also strong where it is strong. For a long time, it was said that American culture would always be too thin, too shallowly rooted in tradition to support a permanent art. Pollock's painting shows that American art can fulfill all the traditional demands we make on art—inspire and feed a rich legacy of successors, give form to a moment in human feeling, be both bullion and background music—without necessarily having any foundation of settled values or lucid intention. You *can* build your house on sand if you don't mind looking at the waves. ♦

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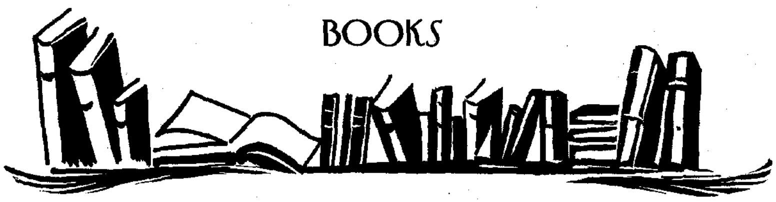

INFINITE EXERCISE

Harold Bloom takes on all of Shakespeare, and humanity, too.

BY ANTHONY LANE

JUST who does Harold Bloom think he is? At the start of his new book, "Shakespeare: The Invention of the Human" (Riverhead Books; $35), he calls himself "a heretical transcendentalist." Five hundred pages later, that is helpfully revised to "a gnostic sect of one." I would very much like to know which of these descriptions is entered on Bloom's tax returns. He currently teaches at Yale and at New York University, and remains one of the few academics who could write a sentence such as "I do not trust the scholars on Shakespeare's politics," as if he himself were a gentleman amateur, or a ruminating Bottom. Somehow, treading water at the brink of the mainstream, Bloom has managed to produce twenty-two books, beginning with a study of Shelley in 1959. If he considers himself to be less than a scholar, his students and admirers certainly revere him as more than one—as the wand-waving Prospero of American criticism. Equally, his detractors prefer to view him as its baffled and superannuated Lear, and you certainly catch an authentic tone of sovereign crossness in some of the pronouncements that litter his latest work: "I suppose it is my own outrageousness that tells me . . ."; "With my characteristic temerity, I assert . . ." At one point, he even declares a personal interest in Barabas, Marlowe's Jew of Malta: "A wonderful monster, the only stage role I perpetually long to essay." You may like to know that Barabas poisons nuns.

"Shakespeare: The Invention of the Human" is proof of a lifelong loyalty to the Shakespearean cause. Its final sentence runs as follows: "When we are wholly human, and know ourselves, we become most like either Hamlet or Falstaff." This is a generous view of our lives, although it is hardly undemanding: what Bloom politely fails to address is the possibility that many of us, what with getting the kids to bed and switching on the TV, tend to put off self-knowledge until tomorrow, and that all we can hope for, as the years slide by, is to become like Shallow, or the hapless Roderigo, or the Fool. Bloom himself, by his own admission, did not acquire a television until he was nearly forty, sometime around 1970—a triumph of American denial, although one can't help wondering whether a prolonged acquaintance with Lucille Ball might not have spiced his already lusty appetite for Beatrice, Rosalind, and the other Desi-levelling dames of Shakespeare's art. Still, those four decades gave Bloom the bedrock of reading that you sense immediately in the bullish confidence, the knowledgeable naïveté, of his writings. Will his generation be the last to attempt that quizzical Victorian solidity of learning and not to mind the calumny it brings?

As if in personal tribute to those whom he calls Shakespeare's "heroic vitalists," Bloom charges onward for seven hundred and fifty pages, working his way through each of the plays in turn; in practical terms, this makes the book a more amenable work than it might at first appear to be, since none of the essays are so firmly stirred into the main argument that they cannot be sampled with pleasure on their own. The chapter on "The Tempest," for example, could be propped against the faucets during a long bath, and a few pages of Bloom on "Othello" would usefully fill that long wait for the subway, although such is the critic's hymn to the satanic potency of Iago that you might consider it less fun to board the train than to nudge your fellow-travellers onto the track—and, needless to say, blame somebody else for their fall. If there is one belief that pulses throughout Bloom's book, it is the full-blooded sense of a Shakespeare who exists to teach us—not, one hastens to add, that he can teach us facts, or teach us how to behave, let alone how to be better. All he can do is teach us

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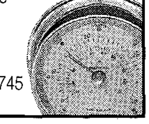

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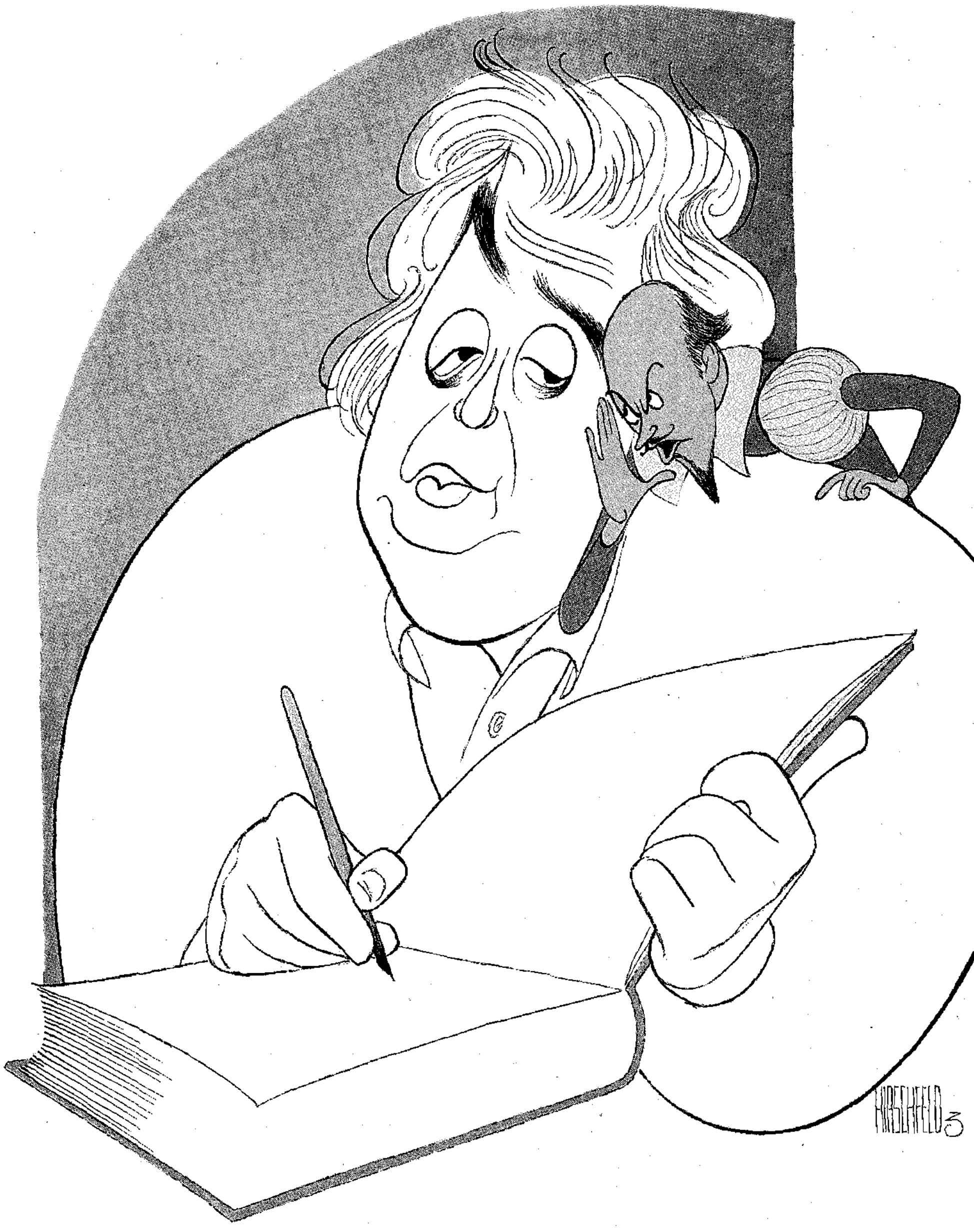


Bloom and the Bard: In the critic's view, Shakespeare created not only our classic characters but modern personality itself.

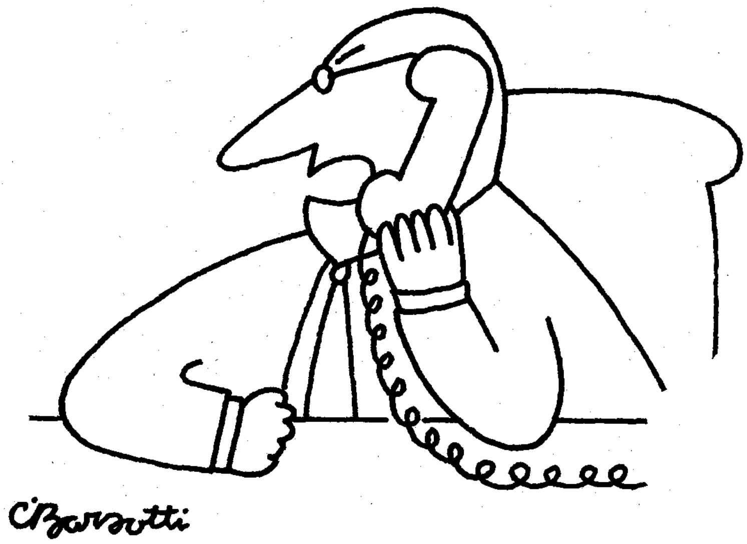
to "think too well," to guide us through the innumerable ways in which life may be led and understood, and sensation be kept alive and alight; he can teach us fullness, even if it burns and blackens into the fullness of despair. The lesson is bound to be humbling: we tend to congratulate ourselves on the thought that our existence is peculiar to us, but, in Bloom's account, Shakespeare invariably got there first. He not only preëmpted our characters; he practically made them up:

> We are lived by drives we cannot command, and we are read by works we cannot resist. We need to exert ourselves and read Shakespeare as strenuously as we can, while knowing that his plays will read us more energetically still.

To those who have never bumped into Bloom's prose before, this will sound at worst willful and at best gorgeously obscure. But you soon get into the swing of his persuasions, and it becomes clear that Bloom, like Emerson, gives himself helplessly to criticism as if it were poetry: "Shakespeare: The Invention of the Human" makes more sense as an enraptured, incantatory epic than as a courteous explication of the plays. Although Bloom's beef against feminist critics, for instance, grows wearisome and unjust, he has a point when he says that Shakespeare has long since enfolded their arguments, and that no reader can press the claims of women as lucidly and wittily as Rosalind herself does, in "As You Like It." But if it's practical criticism you're after, forget it: this stuff is about as practical, and as dazzling, as a unicorn. Bloom has made it his business to thrash those theorists and ideologues who treat literature as the outcome of historical circumstances, yet his own approach is stranger still: literature seems to flow, under high pressure, from the barely controlled circumstances of the writer's urges and instincts, and from a vexed misapprehension of earlier writers. The act of ordinary reading, by comparison, is close to involuntary. Texts may be hard and stubborn, but they flow into us like oxygen or coffee, whether we like it or not:

> Can we conceive of ourselves without Shakespeare? By "ourselves" I do not mean only actors, directors, teachers, critics, but also you and everyone you know.

This is magnificent and heartening;



"Just tell him it's 'other people' as in 'other people's money.'"

• •

whether it is true is, of course, another matter. Dispatch a team of statisticians to count the number of children reading Shakespeare in school, or—and this is the more telling test—of adults who continue to read him afterward, and you would be lucky to come across Shakespearean exertions of any sort. The plays are still performed and filmed, and in England, at least, the image of the bearded bard seems to crop up wherever you look, even on A.T.M. cards; but, if you were to walk into a housing project in London or New York—or, even better, into a Giorgio Armani store—and ask people at random whether they could conceive of themselves without Shakespeare, they would probably call the cops.

That would not dismay Harold Bloom, however, for the simple reason that he does not expect us to go around citing or pondering Shakespeare all the time; thoughts of Shakespeare lie too deep for quotes. No one who has followed Bloom's tireless inquiries into the mechanisms of poetic tradition would expect the inheritors of Shakespeare to do anything as vulgar as actually speak lines of verse. The import of the plays bears down upon us in other, more insidious ways; for four hundred years, Shakespeare has gradually molded our apprehension of the world and, more especially, of other beings. Whenever we inspect the actions and moralities of our friends, or muse on the private crazes of our politicians, or fumble around in the maze of our own motives, we are doing things that scarcely existed before the advent of Shakespeare. So Bloom would have us believe, anyway, although you may find it easier to go the distance with him if you blank out whole swaths of previous writing. Bloom himself refers to Dante and to the Jesus of the Gospels, but, on a less forbidding level, people have been reading someone like Horace for two thousand years, on the assumption, or in the fond illusion, that they know the guy: balding, bibulous, touched with cowardice, torn between the pleasures of the country and the need to crawl at court. Catullus and Juvenal set patterns of longing and scorn that have never been erased, and, a century and a half before Shakespeare, Villon took jagged poetic honesty about as far as it would go. It is true that Shakespeare scored all these dying falls, and a hundred more, in his own music, but does that make him responsible for "The Invention of the Human"?

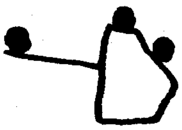
This question nags at Bloom's work and never goes away, not least because he never really stops to define what he means by "human." The word itself is dangerously anachronistic for his purposes: according to the Oxford English Dictionary, the first recorded use of "human" as a freestanding adjective was in 1727, and its first use as a noun—meaning more than simple membership in the human race—came from Elizabeth Barrett Browning, in 1841. As far as I'm concerned, it's been going to the dogs ever since; I've sat through enough Hollywood miniseries to know that when someone is described as "very human," and the word "warm" is somewhere in the vicinity, it's time to switch off. So what does Harold Bloom want with it? "The representation of human character and personality remains always the supreme literary value," he writes in his preface. "Falstaff and Hamlet are the invention of the human, the inauguration of personality as we have come to recognize it. . . . Personality, in our sense, is a Shakespearean invention." This sounds resplendent, but there is something murky and tremulous in the terminology. "Personality," too, is a word that has been rubbed and debased beyond repair, and even Bloom's selfless attempts to coin it afresh are compromised by its vagueness. In his chapter on "Hamlet" he declares, "Life must be true to Shakespeare if personality is to have value, is to *be* value." If you can tell me what, if anything, that sentence means, I'll buy you a drink. Bloomian humanity obviously has much to do with inwardness, with the progress of self-consciousness, but even that is insufficient: though Falstaff often soliloquizes, his spirit is centrifugal, a welcome corrective to Hamlet's frowning absorption. Bloom has been harping on these two men, with canine devotion, for some time—they take center stage in his chapter on Shakespeare in "The Western Canon" (1994) and in the Shakespeare lecture that was printed in "Ruin the Sacred Truths" (1989)—and together they suggest that what he really and most profoundly means by "human" can be summarized as follows: "Drinks a lot" and "Refuses to shut up." Rather like Shakespeare, I guess.

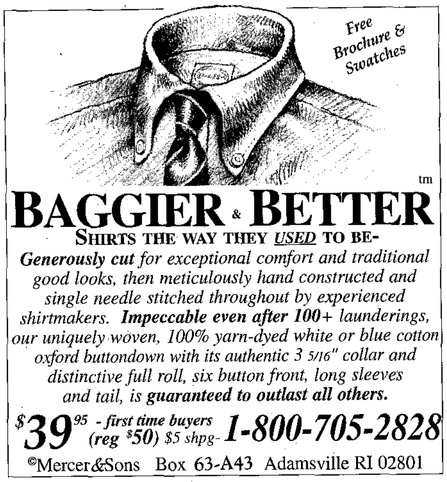
"THE decisive theatrical experience of my life came half a century ago, in 1946, when I was sixteen, and watched Ralph Richardson play Falstaff." So Bloom tells us in a chapter on "Henry IV," compounding the two parts into a single play. He was not the only young man to be won over. Kenneth Tynan saw the same production, and marvelled at the scene in the orchard, with Laurence Olivier's Shallow paying lazy court to Richardson's Falstaff. "If I had only half an hour more to spend in theatres, and could choose at large, no question but I would have these," Tynan wrote. Yet the experience sent the two of them in different directions: Tynan spent the rest of his life watching and writing about the theatre, as if in pursuit of that once-glimpsed Grail, whereas Bloom became a literary critic. Most of his remarks on performances of Shakespeare are caustic and dismissive, as if anything less than Richardson were not worth the ticket; it isn't so much that a bad production, like a foolish piece of criticism, is an insult to Shakespeare as that no production can do justice to the original. The theatre is a little room, as Bloom sees it, and thus no place for the great reckoning of Shakespeare.

As another disappointed playgoer, spoiled by movies, I am tempted to side with this prejudice, and yet at a literal level it is nonsense: Shakespeare, however poets may prefer to forget the fact, wrote for the theatre, and, even if a performance of "Hamlet" offers only paltry illumination of the work, that experience becomes part of the endlessly angled light that the play, like a jewel, invites. I am more convinced by Bloom's perpetual grievance against the theatre than I am by the logic that proceeds from it. He informs us that "the largest fault of every staging of 'Twelfth Night' I've attended is that the pace is not fast enough," and, of the appearance of Barnardine toward the end of "Measure for Measure," says that "I have never seen this delicious and profound outrageousness properly directed and acted." This reinforces the Bloomian suspicion that Shakespeare belongs to the study, not to the boards; it's rather like saying that the Holy Bible should be read only in bed, and never in church. But Bloom's high expectation, his quick grasp of the dramatic possibilities that surge and brim in these plays, only proves how thoroughly they were conceived in terms of action; if he finds every "Twelfth Night" too sluggish, that points to formidable powers of acceleration on Shakespeare's part, to his sheer technical genius for bringing people onstage, spinning them around, swapping their identities, and getting them off again. No one, not even A. C. Bradley, has traced the accommodating confines of Shakespearean character with quite such dedication as Bloom, but you can't help wondering if he has neglected the inextricable kinship, proposed first by Aristotle, between character and action—if, that is, the urge to pick Hamlet up with a pair of tweezers and slide him under a microscope has blinded Bloom to the fact that Hamlet is not alone, that he talks to a skull, falls in and out of love, stabs an old man, and even stages a play.

Given this intolerance for Shakespeare in the theatre, you might expect Bloom to fall back on close textual readings—to get his kicks from the skin and muscle of the verse. But that is not his way; ever since he wrote "The Anxiety of Influence," in 1973, Bloom has awed his readers (or freaked them out) by implying that what matters in poetry, and in the fraught abysses between poems, is not the poetry itself. Rather, there appear to be strange subterranean tides at work, a voluble ebb and flow of competing experience. In "A Map of Misreading" (1975), one of his Freud-driven surveys of the continuous wrestling between generations of poets, Bloom wrote, "Poetic influence, in the sense I give to it, has almost nothing to do with the verbal resemblances between one poet and another." I can quite understand how some of his students might have fruitfully misread that sentence as a wonderful excuse not to read poetry at all; if verbal surfaces are no big deal, bang goes the Western canon.

This lofty disdain for textual engagement is alive and mischievous in "Shakespeare: The Invention of the Human." To be sure, the book is crammed with generous helpings of Shakespeare; like Dr. Johnson and Hazlitt, his favored precursors, and also like T. S. Eliot, his bête noire, Bloom is a brilliant quoter—a sure sign of someone who has read pretty much everything. But, unless I've missed it, I'm fairly sure that there is no point in seven hundred and fifty pages where he deigns to tell his readers that Shakespeare wrote his plays in something called iambic pentameter. He can just about bring himself to mention the fact that "Richard II" is composed entirely in verse, but even then his emphasis is a giveaway: "There is no prose whatsoever in 'Richard II,' partly because there is no Falstaff to speak it." Ah, so *that's* the reason. I think Bloom is genuinely saddened that Falstaff is not available to wander into any and all of the plays, like Bing and Bob walking onto the wrong set in the "Road" movies, and I find it hard to disagree with him: the spectacle of Sir John tucking into the baked head in "Titus Andronicus" and calling for a dab of Norwich mustard would have been most edifying. But we must learn to live with that lack, and also to listen for the terrible moment, at the close of "Henry IV, Part 2," when





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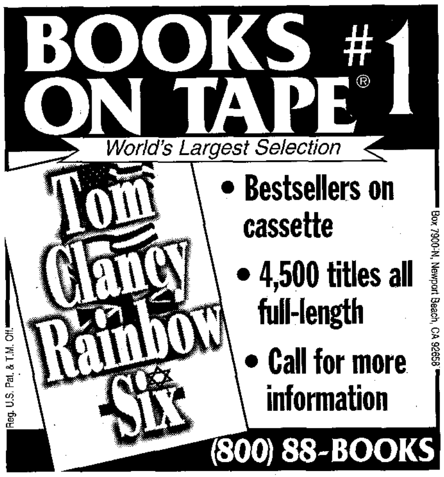

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Falstaff breaks his habit and greets the newly crowned Hal, his former rascal-in-arms, with a line of scannable verse: "My king! My Jove! I speak to thee, my heart!" It is a pathetic attempt to raise his game, but far too late in the day, and the King's reply is a murder of sorts, more heartbreaking than that of Desdemona: "I know thee not, old man. Fall to thy prayers." The old world of prose and cutpurses breathes its last.

It is always risky to criticize the critic for what he fails to do, or for those paths which he has chosen not to pursue. Nevertheless, Bloom's determined indifference to form and his passing nods to the matter of Shakespearean diction sit uneasily with his overarching design: how can you chart the progress of the greatest writer who ever lived, and make your case for that greatness, without reference to what he learned from and within his medium? You might as well show a succession of Rembrandt self-portraits and ignore the gathering freedom of the brushstrokes, which reached their ironic apogee when the flesh was almost dripping from the bones. Early in the book, Bloom castigates a speech from Richard III:

> What do I fear? Myself? There's none
>   else by;
> Richard loves Richard, that is, I and I.
> Is there a murderer here? No. Yes, I am!
> Then fly. What, from myself? Great
>   reason why,
> Lest I revenge.

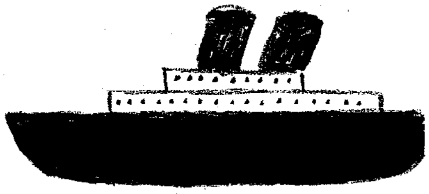
"I cannot think of another passage," Bloom writes, "in which Shakespeare is so inept." Later—almost six hundred pages later—he quotes another set of questions, from "The Winter's Tale":

> Is whispering nothing?
> Is leaning cheek to cheek? is meeting noses?
> Kissing with inside lip? stopping the career
> Of laughing with a sigh (a note infallible
> Of breaking honesty)? horsing foot on foot?
> Skulking in corners? wishing clocks more
>   swift?

This time, Bloom comments, "Leontes's tonalities have a rising intensity matchless even in Shakespeare." But what makes the first speech inept and the second matchless? Bloom's criteria of personality and "circumference of consciousness" will not quite meet the case, for we are as readily convinced of Richard's spiderish villainy as of Leontes's self-grounding paranoia. It would not take much, you might think, for Bloom to point out the youthful Shakespeare's slightly unconfident fondness for rhyming his lines too sturdily, compared to the older man's delicate ability to vary his end-stopped lines with phrases that run on and over—that entertain the ear with a kisslike fluency as well as with the more striking rigor of a clock.

It is because of this reluctance to get down and dirty among the nuts and bolts of poetry, I think, that Bloom gravitates toward the higher ground. You can feel the whole book taking a deep breath as it heads for the summit of the tragedies and for the peaks of the major characters. Yet that is not where "Shakespeare: The Invention of the Human" is either most lively or most instructive. The view may be great from the high ground, but, boy, is it windy up there. Try this: "Inference in Hamlet's praxis is a sublime mode of surmise." Or this: "Shakespeare's uniqueness, his greatest originality, can be described either as a charismatic cognition, which comes from an individual before it enters group thinking, or as a cognitive charisma, which cannot be routinized." What a choice. The younger Harold Bloom devised a florid new vocabulary for his pushy new ideas: "The Anxiety of Influence" introduced us to the delights of Tessera, Apophrades, and Clinamen, which made the critic sound like a gardener with a filthy mind. Those mock-classical tags have dropped off, and I rather miss them now that they're gone; in their place we find words such as "aggressivity," "overgo," and "passional," none of which are wrong but all of which are just off center enough to make the reader stumble.

Compare that knotted language with this, on "Measure for Measure": "It is one of Shakespeare's most effective outrages that Isabella is his most sexually provocative female character, far more seductive even than Cleopatra, the professional seductress." That is true, and provocatively true, all the more so because of its simplicity; it exactly articulates my reaction to watching Kate Nelligan play Isabella on television—a performance that made me seriously contemplate renting a wimple and entering a convent, just in case. Bloom is tremendously clear and credible on "Measure for Measure" ("a comedy that destroys comedy"), as he is on "Love's Labor's Lost" and "Twelfth Night" ("Forces somewhat beyond the characters seem to be living their lives for them"); whatever his overt preferences, he is gripped and turned on by the comic, and by Shakespeare's tendency to wind up even the most silvery farce into a problem play.



You could hardly ask for a more capacious and beneficent work than "Shakespeare: The Invention of the Human." There is even a ripe, Shylockian gusto to Bloom's diatribes against what he calls the School of Resentment—basically, anyone who cannot forgive Shakespeare for being dead, white, male, and scandalously better than he had any right to be. I am not sure, though, that Bloom's own taste for the capacious always serves him well. His barnstorming mission to spread the word of bookishness results not just in largesse but in unfortunate repetitions—the book could have done with a close shave—and, while I relished the epigraph from Nietzsche at the start, I was somehow less moved by it after its fourth appearance in the body of the text. Bloom's beloved line of Hegel, too, about the Shakespeare who makes his characters "free artists of themselves," is a zinger, and crucial to the Bloomian thesis, but, having come across it in two of his previous books, I was less knocked out by it this time.

On the other hand, what is the use of an obsession if it fails to linger and kick, like the Fool at Lear's feet? "Explaining Shakespeare is an infinite exercise; you will become exhausted long before the plays are emptied out," Bloom writes in his calming coda. I was frequently maddened by his own exercises, but never exhausted or bored, and there is real exhilaration in the unfashionable suggestion that plowing through Shakespeare will leave us, while not altogether Falstaffied, at least larger or other than we were. If Harold Bloom continues to devote his life to the hopeful proposition that ordinary readers, as much as players and scholars, may become free artists of themselves, then good luck to him. He's only human. ♦

BRIEFLY NOTED

TRIAGE, by Scott Anderson (Scribner; $23). In this suspenseful first novel, the war photographer Mark Walsh survives an artillery explosion in Kurdistan only to founder in silence upon his return to Brooklyn. His Spanish girlfriend, Elena Morales, helpless in the face of his growing detachment, calls home; Mama enlists the support of the grandfather Elena won't speak to, a self-taught psychiatrist who "purified" Franco's worst killers after the Civil War. The unorthodox treatment the old man administers—sunnily coaxing out the unforgivable war stories—leads to a harrowing reënactment in a meadow in the Andalusian mountains and a well-plotted rapprochement.

QUITE A YEAR FOR PLUMS, by Bailey White (Knopf; $22). "Sometimes you don't need to tell the truth," Eula says to her mad-at-the-world son, Tom. "Sometimes you just need to let the truth alone." White, a commentator on National Public Radio, has in her broadcasts perfected a tone of pungent hilarity. In her mordant, interlocking stories, set in rural Georgia, the characters (who are, variously, lovelorn, hounded, loyal, and on the alert for aliens) turn out to dispense an unexpected measure of common sense.

SIR FRANCIS DRAKE: THE QUEEN'S PIRATE, by Harry Kelsey (Yale; $35). Anglophiles may be disappointed to learn that Sir Francis Drake, that paragon of English Protestant gumption, was a thoroughgoing rotter. Drake executed men without good cause, raped and pillaged, tortured prisoners, cheated his partners and crews, and shirked his duties as a naval commander when there was a chance for further plunder. This scrupulously researched and calmly argued book will leave Drake's champions little hope of restoring him to the rosy place in the English pantheon he once occupied: Kelsey's Drake is, alas, all too plausible.

SLOW MOTION, by Dani Shapiro (Random House; $23.95). When this memoir opens, the future novelist is a twenty-three-year-old college dropout, an occasional actress, an alcoholic who uses cocaine, and the mistress of a flamboyant lawyer who is the stepfather of a former college classmate. This is a bizarre predicament for the daughter of rich Orthodox Jews, and, in spare, unflinching prose, Shapiro tells us how she worked her way out of a life of pointless degradation.

REBUILDING THE INDIAN, by Fred Haefele (Riverhead; $24.95). There are books about motorcycling as a metaphor for life; here life—within the writer's pregnant wife—is a metaphor for restoring a 1947 Indian Chief motorcycle. Haefele, a fifty-one-year-old tree surgeon from Missoula, describes how his search for vintage parts eventually involved an entire community of fanatical mechanics, impoverished motorcycle collectors, and renegade bikers—a collaboration, he realizes, that gave him skills as much social and spiritual as practical. "Parts are a never-ending quest," he tells us. "They are the fever and the cure, the question and the answer."

(Advt.)

History provides fertile soil in which fiction and nonfiction grow equally well.

Author **James Carlos Blake** writes raw, powerful chronicles of the restless, the outcast, and the lawless in America. His previous novel, *In the Rogue Blood,* was awarded the *Los Angeles Times* Book Prize for Fiction. Now, in ***RED GRASS RIVER***, Blake gives us a saga of family loyalties, blood feuds, and betrayed friendships set in the Florida Everglades in the early years of this century. It is the legend of two men—one a criminal and folk hero, the other a lawman and respected symbol of a thriving community—and their progression from close youthful companions to bitter adversaries, as the land that nurtured them changes as well from lush wilderness to a boom town called Miami. There is love in these pages also, but it is passion with a bite—as feral and unpredictable as the novel's characters and locale.

JAMES CARLOS BLAKE
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The accomplishments of this nation's first black Navy pilot are celebrated in **Theodore Taylor**'s ***THE FLIGHT OF JESSE LEROY BROWN***. This is the true story of a man of remarkable courage and tenacity who defied the naysayers and fought firmly entrenched—if unwritten—official policies of racial exclusion to realize his cherished dream of flight in the spring of 1947. Jesse Brown's great personal triumph and heroic exploits over the battlefields of Korea have remained largely unknown and unheralded until now. It is high time his inspiring contributions were acknowledged by every American, regardless of race.

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Neal Gaiman is a writer who creates his own alternate histories and legends. ***SMOKE AND MIRRORS***, his new collection of short fiction and poems, contains many unique literary inventions—a fairy tale private eye, a Holy Grail in a second-hand store, a stray cat who battles evil nightly—which is nothing less than one would expect from the creator of *Neverwhere* and *The Sandman*. In Gaiman's hands, magic is no mere illusion, but a powerful means to reveal the true nature of our humanity obscured in the smoke of our fears and reflected in the funhouse mirrors of our dreams.

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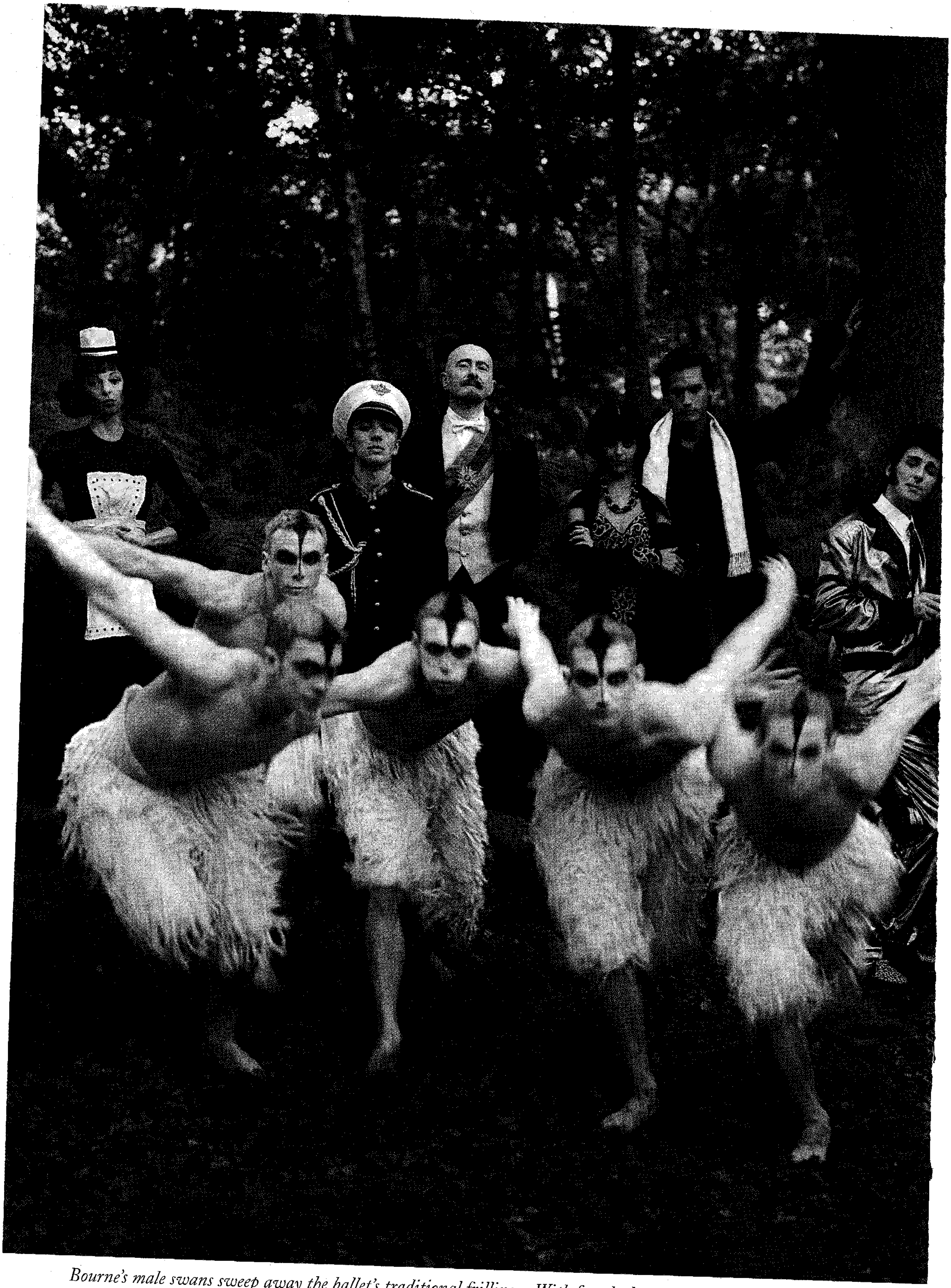
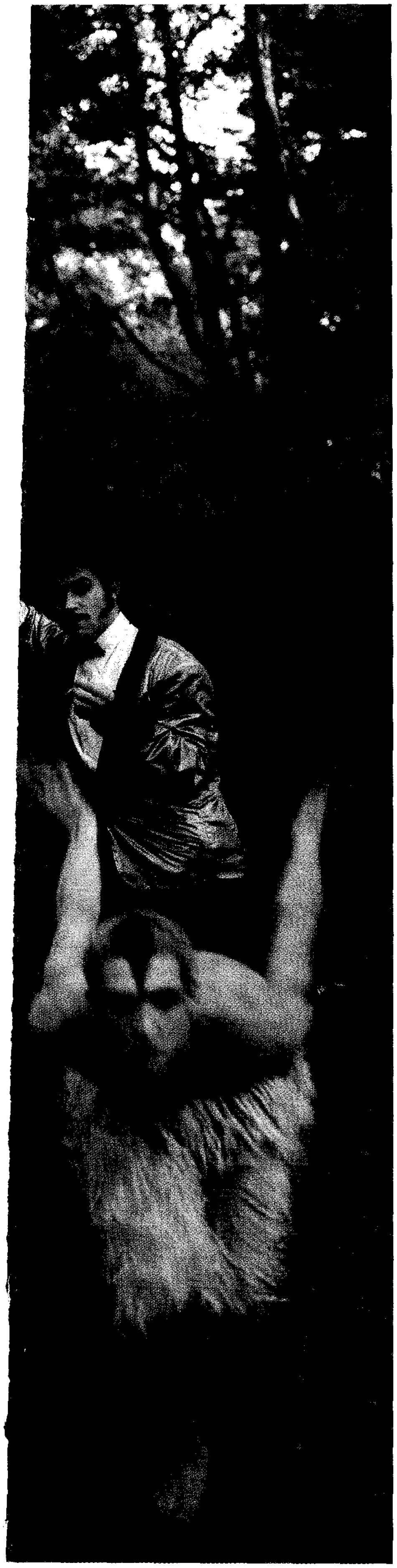


Bourne's male swans sweep away the ballet's traditional frilliness. With female dancers, Bourne says, “I would have found

DANCING IN THE DARK

“Swan Lake” is a triumph of storytelling, not camp.

BY JOHN LAHR



ry difficult to do anything original.”

MATTHEW BOURNE’S thrilling, iconoclastic version of Tchaikovsky’s “Swan Lake,” which ran for twenty-one weeks in London’s West End, has settled sensationally at the Neil Simon on Broadway, which is so often the habitat of turkeys. The production, meant to mark the centenary of the ballet’s St. Petersburg première, in 1895, takes the story of the troubled Prince who falls in love with a swan out of the realm of the folkloric and into the realm of Freudian nightmare, where obsession substitutes for enchantment. Bourne, a director and choreographer with great narrative gifts of design, pace, and humor, has made four essential changes in deconstructing the fairy tale: it is about English, not German, royalty; the time is the nineteen-fifties and sixties, not an earlier century; it is an internal rather than an external struggle; and the swans are male rather than female. This last simple but profound change sweeps away in one stroke the hidebound froufrou of the traditional “Swan Lake” and releases enormous energy into the music. “If I had used female dancers, I would have found it very difficult to do anything original,” Bourne has said of his cast (whose principals alternate). Although “Swan Lake” is the epitome of Balanchine’s observation that “dance is woman,” Bourne concluded, after observing swans, with their aggressive tendencies and their massive wing span, that they were more male than female. In those powerful and extended swan wings is the metaphor of embrace which is the framing device of this production. The Prince, of course, yearns for the embrace of both the white and the black swan; what he seeks in these twin terrors, and what Bourne brilliantly finds, is the little boy’s wish to be both loved and contained.

The hope of solace in the swan’s embrace is foreshadowed as the curtain comes up, and we realize that the production does not bear the markings of high-camp detachment. A huge swan is projected behind the raked bed of the Young Prince (Andrew Walkinshaw) as he tosses in a night sweat. His unattainable mother, the Queen (the elegant Isabel Mortimer, on the night I attended), enters. He reaches out to her; she won’t linger and comfort him. On that note of privilege and neglect, the production cuts to a series of deftly orchestrated satiric vignettes of state as the bored, puppyish Young Prince is taken through the rituals of propriety and finally brought to heel as a full-fledged Prince (the lyrical Scott Ambler) by his imperious mother, who has a sweet tooth for guardsmen. As the servants swirl around him, the Prince is dressed, brushed, polished, and paraded. He’s completely under wraps. Tchaikovsky’s soaring symphonic sound, which was originally dismissed by critics as undanceable, buoys up the Prince’s progress, which is satirically charted by Bourne and his clever designer Lez Brotherston. They poke a bit of fun at the current English Royals: we see a toy Corgi, an exercise in giving the Royal Wave, and a demonstration of the Prince’s disgust at modern art as he reels backward from a Pop Art screen print of the Queen. In the original, the Prince is aghast at the prospect of being forced to choose a wife; here, in the hothouse climate of the court, where anything clearly goes, his confusion is more about his confounding sexual feelings. We catch him taking a backward glance at the muscular posterior of a classical statue, but the gold-digging Girlfriend (Emily Piercy), a tart in open-toed shoes, who carries an echo of Koo Stark

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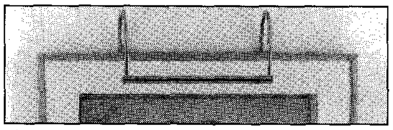

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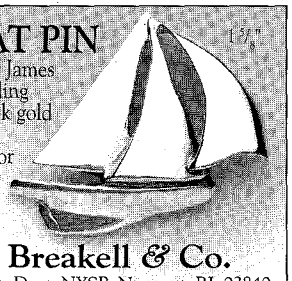

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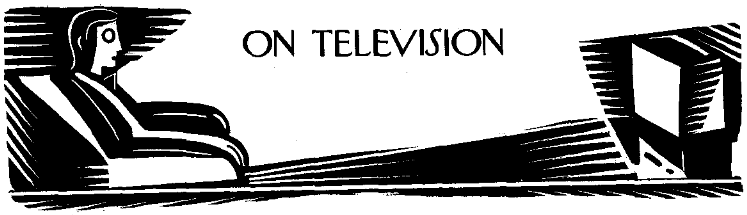
and even Fergie, is trolled under his royal nose to get the heterosexual salmon in him going upstream.

Raising the stakes on the Prince's fractured psyche, Bourne contrives to have him literally beaten up and kicked out of a Soho dive—Swank Bar, it's called—where he has been taken by the Queen's Private Secretary (Barry Atkinson) to get some satisfaction. This terrific scene, in which the dancers frug and funky-chicken to Tchaikovsky's score and the Prince comes up empty even with his Girlfriend, whom he subsequently sees being paid off by the Private Secretary, leads to the Prince's suicidal despair. He has no mother to speak of. He has no father. He has no Girlfriend. As he's slumped against a brick wall in his brokenness, a vision of swans looms briefly behind him—an intimation of transcendence.

In the flesh, Bourne's swans are a wonderful sight—quite unlike the leggy, svelte, traditional ballet variety. These creatures, which the Prince comes upon when he is about to throw himself in a pond, are bare-chested, barefooted, chunky, and sexy. As a group they seem to have a low center of gravity; they're grounded and earthy. They wear what look like feathered gaucho breeches, which fit tightly over their muscular thighs and make them seem part bird and part satyr. What they convey to us and to the fragile Prince is a sense of power, freedom, and erotic charge. The chief personification of these attributes is the Swan, danced by the charismatic Adam Cooper, whose signature movements carve the air with unusual clarity and attack. There's nothing ethereal or romantic about Cooper: he's all sweat and sex, a kind of Dude Swan. The Prince instantly falls in love, and it's to Bourne's credit as a storyteller that his emotional merging with the Swan is psychologically credible and compelling. As he first investigates the swans, the Prince embraces himself, wrapping his arms around his own torso; after a while, the Swan casually drapes his long left arm over the Prince, who bends his head forward against the wing, wrapping himself inside the Swan's body, and then leans forward to roll the Swan up onto his back. Even though Bourne undercuts the gravity of this courtship with a boppy sendup of the ballet's "Four Cygnets" passage, there is something primal and unforgettable in their dance of love, which is not really about gay sex but about sexuality itself, and about the blessing of being held in the heart of the other.

In Act II, at a royal ball, the Prince falls for the gate-crashing Black Swan, who is referred to here as the Stranger; it's Adam Cooper, doubling brilliantly as a kind of Pimp Swan in leather, with designer stubble and a riding crop that he puts to piquant use. The Stranger is the opposite of the white Swan: he's the ultimate bad object—a sinister, hell-raising piece of rough trade, whose dances seduce everyone at the gala, including the Queen and the Prince, to whom he whispers frightful things. What the Prince recognizes and perversely loves is the tormenting, hate-filled personification of his own self-punishing melancholy. In the end, driven crazy by his mother's cruel competitiveness, the Prince brandishes a gun at them both; the Girlfriend is shot; and the ballet, which appears now to be happening in the mind of the Prince, goes into that special ballet zone of allegorical overload. Impoverishment gives way to erotic thrill and then to fantasies of abandonment as the Prince anguishes in his sleep under a canopy of stars; in a gorgeously childlike image, swans crawl out from under his bed and dance fiercely around him. The Swan materializes to protect the Prince from the predatory attack; then the group turns on the Swan, who has the scent of the human on him, and annihilates him.

In this great romantic ballet, the Prince seems to succumb to the greatest of romantic conventions: a broken heart. The Queen discovers him sprawled face down at the foot of his bed; above his body, visible through a skylight, the Swan holds the Young Prince in his arms. The image plays as both a resurrection and a judgment. But in this last embrace the Swan is more than a symbolic immanence: his presence is something felt and experienced. Bourne has managed, by an ingenious concept—one that seems simpler on its face than it really is—to free "Swan Lake" from the habitual and return it to theatrical dream time, a realm of myth and music in which the audience can venture deeper than it might have expected into the loneliness of the human heart. ◆



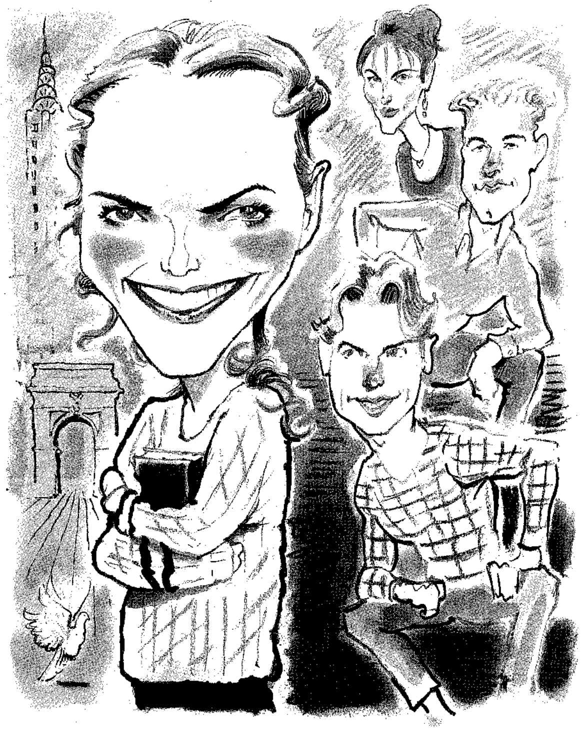
AUTUMN IN NEW YORK

Urban studies, for freshmen and yuppies.

BY NANCY FRANKLIN

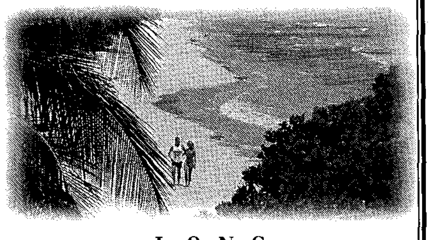
DID the WB Network spend so much money making sure that "Felicity" would be the most talked-about show of the new TV season that it didn't have enough left over to pay for lighting equipment? Though "Felicity" is set in New York, the city that never sleeps, it seems to take place in a kind of drowsy, Sweden-in-December twilight. As in a Bergman film, the psychic-misery index here is high, though that's no surprise in a show that (a) is about a teen-ager and (b) is about a teen-ager named (God help her) Felicity. I don't at all mean to condescend to adolescence, but it is a sickroom that any survivor would reënter only with the greatest reluctance. A show about a girl who breaks away impulsively from the plan her parents have for her—to follow in her father's footsteps at Stanford and become a doctor—and goes to a college in New York instead, without their moral or financial support: what I ask of such a show is not only that it make me a little bit sick with remembered feelings (that's easy) but that it make me *want* to live through those feelings again. In a voice-over at the beginning of the first episode, during Felicity's high-school graduation ceremony, Felicity worries that high school will stay with her like the phantom pain left behind when a limb is amputated: "What if high school went away but the feeling of it didn't?" So far, so good.

Of course, "Felicity" isn't aimed at me—it's aimed at the young women less than half my age who watch the show that precedes it on Tuesday nights, "Buffy the Vampire Slayer." In a way, the juxtaposition of these two shows illustrates the classic developmental pattern in girls as they hit puberty: one minute riding high on all that grrrl power, the next minute stuck in the mud of low self-esteem. But "Felicity" isn't that simple. It's not exactly retrograde, and it's not exactly modern. Keri Russell, the heroine, has Pre-Raphaelite blue eyes and long, wavy hair, but she also has a firm chin and a direct gaze. If for a moment she thinks of herself as a lemon, it's only another few moments until it occurs to her that she can make lemonade. She goes to see her freshman


Felicity (Keri Russell) and her sensitive college friends test negative for cynicism, even in New York.

DAVID SMALL

Tortola, British Virgin Islands



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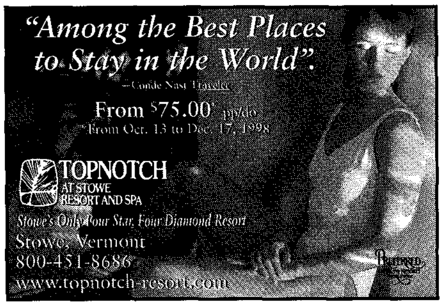

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adviser at the slightest sign of upset, and she's efficiently in touch with her feelings. (To update the game in which participants downed a shot of booze every time someone said, "Hi, Bob!" on "The Bob Newhart Show," I suggest that viewers have a belt every time Felicity says, "I'm O.K. with that.")

"Felicity" has been touted as this year's "Dawson's Creek." In addition to featuring sweet-faced young men who have thoughtful hair, the shows share a muffled, draggy dramatic quality. The kids in these teen-noir series all have a slightly swollen look, as if they'd had an allergic reaction to life, and they are all in dead earnest—you search their faces in vain for a sign of an interestingly wicked, inappropriate, funny thought. Even the resident adviser in Felicity's dorm, a Robby Bensonish sensitivo with big wet eyes and bee-stung lips, tests negative for cynicism. Being young may not be all that funny, but when the R.A. says to Felicity, who by the end of the first episode is thinking about going home, "Stay in New York or perish," you can't help wishing that some sophomoric smart-aleck would bop into the room and say, "Can't I do both?"

IN a season in which the new comedies feature enough idiotic secondary characters to repopulate both Hooterville and Gilligan's Island several times over, "Will & Grace" is notable for having one of the few keepers. His name is Jack; some would say he's flamboyantly gay, but calling him anything less than a flaming queen would be doing him an injustice. Sean Hayes plays this character—the boyishly buzz-cut, sneaker-wearing version of the stereotype—with relish, good timing, and the kind of perpetually wounded amour propre that great comic characters are made of. (This was the kind of shtick that Phil Hartman was so good at—playing someone who actively invites others to deflate his ego, so that he may have the pleasure of reinflating it.)

Seeing a character like Jack on TV—a character who doesn't know the meaning of the words "Don't ask, don't tell"—makes me wonder: Why hasn't there been a peep of protest? What about the children? What about family values? Where are all the "Ellen"-bashers of last year? Focussed on the doings at the White House, I suppose, or perhaps simply worn out from the past season's condemnation spree. Whatever your feeling is about gay characters on TV, you'd have to agree that this particular show needs Jack. His delightful narcissism aside, "Will & Grace" is a mostly dronelike affair. It's set in the more bourgeois quarters of New York: Grace's office (she's an interior designer) is in the Puck Building, and Will's apartment is on Riverside Drive. The ampersand in the title isn't insignificant: these two—handsome professionals in their early thirties, and best friends since college—aren't a couple, technically, but they constitute a partnership nonetheless. He's gay and single, she's straight and single, and theirs is a relationship that many women in this city have had with a gay friend: a Manhattan marriage. In the scene that opens the first episode—a scene that tricks us into thinking they *are* a couple—they are in their separate apartments exchanging pillow talk on the phone. You have the sense that they end each day with this enviable (if telephonic) intimacy. They discuss "ER," Susan Lucci, and Bed Bath & Beyond, and when one of them talks, the other one *pays attention*. The writing in this show, in which brand names and references to celebrities are meant to speak volumes about the characters, is, I think, directed at tuppies—tired urban professionals in their late thirties and early forties, who supposedly want their undemanding entertainment larded with references to other undemanding entertainment, like lumps of cookie dough in vanilla ice cream. (I'm counting the episodes until someone mentions Alexis and Krystle's catfight in the pool in "Dynasty.") In addition to being insulting in its assumption of complacency, "Will & Grace" is a little out of date. Women in New York have long complained that all the men here are either married or gay. But gay men, at least, used to be available; relationships with them may not have been sexual, but they were often truly romantic. These days, though, your best gay male friend of a certain age is more likely to be spending his free time picking out towels with his mate or going to their Jack Russell's obedience-school graduation than he is to be hanging out with you. It's official: there really are no available men in New York. Now all the gay men are married, too. ♦

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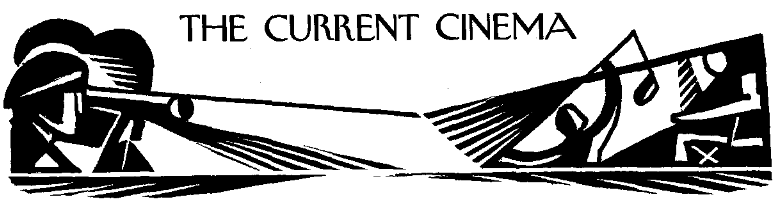


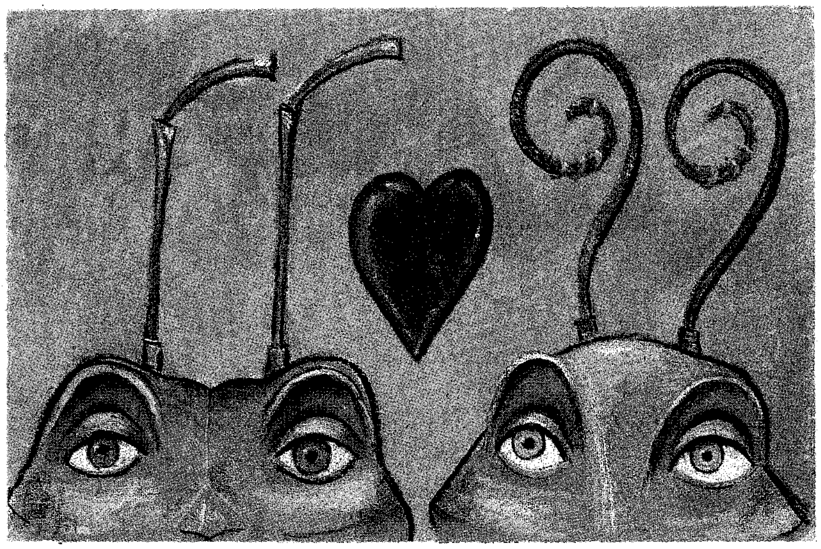
THE CURRENT CINEMA

NO PICNIC

The view from the bottom in "Antz" and "Happiness."

BY ANTHONY LANE

THE cast of the new DreamWorks production, "Antz," is so ridiculously strong that it might as well be a Woody Allen picture. The big names include Dan Aykroyd, Anne Bancroft, Jane Curtin, Danny Glover, Gene Hackman, Jennifer Lopez, Sylvester Stallone, Sharon Stone, and Christopher Walken, as well as Allen himself. The sad thing is that at no point do we see his crumply, stricken face, for "Antz" is animated, and the stars are lending no more than their disembodied voices. At its best, however, the movie does feel weirdly like a Woody Allen film: it's the tale of a tight-knit urban community of scary monsters and super-creeps, each of whom wants to get the dirt on everyone else.



Cartoons no longer: suffering, adult style, in the spooky-clean world of computer animation.

AHMET GORGÜN

Allen plays Z, a worker ant who wants to be so much more: "There's gotta be something better out there," he says. The opening scene sees him unfolding his distress to his ant psychiatrist; like most of the snappier gags in "Antz," the idea of an insect shrink zips lightly past you before you have time to realize how endearing it is. Z has no option but to resume his toil at the rock face, and to be solaced by his drinking buddy, a soldier ant named Weaver (Sylvester Stallone). Movie buffs everywhere will give little squeals of glee as they realize that this represents the first professional encounter between Allen and Stallone since Sly played a straphanging heavy in "Bananas," in 1971. The interplay between them now has a companionable ease, and Allen sounds like a man who has had twenty-seven years to get over his fear of being beaten up. As if to reinforce this détente, the plot even demands that Z and Weaver trade places for a day; say what you like about animation, it is probably the only artistic environment in which Woody Allen can pretend to be Sylvester Stallone and get away with it.

"Antz," which was directed by Eric Darnell and Tim Johnson, is only the second full-length feature—the first was "Toy Story"—to be made wholly with computer animation. It has amazing depth of field; the scenes in the underground ant colony remind you of Piranesi prisons, with tunnels and girders stretching far back into the crisp gloom. What computers can't yet get a handle on is texture, on the random ways in which physical surfaces are rubbed and scarred. This was no problem with "Toy Story," where the natural sheen of the animation coincided happily with the fact that the heroes were molded from plastic; it is more of a letdown in "Antz," which is, by definition, set in a universe of trash and crap. Z hears of a place called Insectopia, and the joke is that when he finally reaches this haven it's actually a garbage dump full of rotting food; but the joke sickens and dies, because the garbage cannot help but suffer from the same spooky, enhanced cleanness in which computer design has wrapped the entire movie. "Antz" never quite scurries and itches as it should; it's like a Paul Klee painting reworked by Norman Rockwell.

The most curious aspect of "Antz" is that it tries to work this decorative uniformity into its plot. "Toy Story" established its characters quickly and distinctly, whereas ants (an inexpressive choice for animation, when you think about it) all look pretty much the same, and you spend a fatal half hour trying to work out who is who, and to match the shiny brown heads with the various voices. As if to counteract—or subtly to protest—this flatness, the animators work hard to mark Z out as an individual and hoist him above the vulgar mob. So he becomes a soldier, fights a vicious battle against fat white termites, emerges as the lone survivor, and woos Princess Bala (Sharon Stone), the colony babe; this infuriates Bala's intended, General Mandible (Gene Hackman), who thinks of Z as the kind of slovenly element who should be expelled from the anthill. Z and Bala soon find themselves on the outside, heading for Insectopia, and fighting off such menacing substances as chewing gum and water drops.

The pacing of this progress is nicely judged, but the politics of Z's insubordination remain a complete mystery. The mass trudge of the workers and the soldiers' parade in front of Mandible seem to be modelled sarcastically on Stalinist Russia and May Day in Moscow; if they are, why, when Z stirs up his fellow-ants, does one of them say, "It's the workers who control the means of production"—the classic Marxist cry against capitalist oppressors? Is Z a Capra nerd, a Jonathan Livingston insect, or a Chaplin figure, breaking the habits of a million ordinary lifetimes? And what of Mandible, who goes from promising to "rinse away all the filth from our gutters," which is a semi-quotation from Travis Bickle in "Taxi Driver," to ranting about the pride and purity of the colony, which is straight Hitler? Above all, what will your kids say about this?

Animated movies are in the process of being reinvented, but nobody seems clear whom they should be aimed at. The animators would never dream of using the word "cartoon," but we will always sense (and, as parents, hope for) a childish essence in their product, and there is something unsettling about their efforts to infuse it with more mature emotions. "I had a very anxious childhood," Z says, explaining how hard it was to be "the middle child in a family of five million." I laughed at this, but it's no more than a sop to those adults in the audience who were reared on the neuroses of Woody Allen. We scoff at the schmalz and corn of Disney productions, but the awkward fact remains that, even now, kids like to linger over exactly those patches of prettiness that make us break into a sweat; a film like "Antz" flees from innocence at its peril. Still, it's a flight of intricate fancy, not least when Z and Bala, stuck in the gum on the base of a sneaker, are levered off with a penny. "Who the hell is *that*?" Z shouts, as the face of a giant Abraham Lincoln looms into view. The film is all the better for such comic incursions of the man-made world; if it's a hit, maybe this most Clinton-friendly of studios could start planning a sequel, in which Z and his friends come to the aid of our beleaguered President. I can see it now: DreamWorks presents "Pantz."

THE new film from Todd Solondz is, like "Antz," an accomplished exercise in putting a large selection of characters through a series of filthy underground activities. Working downward from the elders, we have Lenny and Mona Jordan (Ben Gazzara and Louise Lasser), whose long marriage is sputtering to a sour close. They have three daughters: Joy (Jane Adams), who starts the movie by shedding one boyfriend (Jon Lovitz) and spends the rest of it looking for another; Helen (Lara Flynn Boyle), who writes successful books and exists in steely misery; and Trish (Cynthia Stevenson), who is married to the considerate Bill (Dylan Baker). Trish has three children and hardly a care in the world, but the cares kick in once the police come calling for Bill, who has drugged and raped one of the boys in their son's class. Add Helen's neighbors, an obscene prank-caller named Allen (Philip Seymour Hoffman), and the enormous Kristina (Camryn Manheim), whose freezer is basically a personal morgue, and you begin to wonder whether the title of the film, "Happiness," might not be the tiniest bit ironic.

Solondz, who found fame with "Welcome to the Dollhouse," is working on a wider canvas here, although his purpose—a warning to the rest of humanity to stay clear of New Jersey—remains unchanged, as does his taste for the dry, laconic shock. When the figures in "Happiness" begin to unpack their sealed and toxic lusts, so the director deepens his deadpan gaze; some viewers will warm to such cool outrageousness, yet by the end his quiet fixation with sex (and with nothing *but* sex) makes the movie even more repressed and screwed up than the Americans whom it claims to anatomize. What offended me most about the already notorious scene in which Bill confesses his sins to his pubescent son, Billy (Rufus Read), and says that he never fantasized about sodomizing him—an admission that makes Billy weep, if you please—is that it's not offensive enough. It's just seamy and deflated, and it rings untrue; the cops know about Bill, so it's unlikely that they would leave him to sit around at night with his own son. After that, we have nothing to look forward to but the climax of the action, which is itself a climax; it feels dismally appropriate that, what with "There's Something About Mary" and "Happiness," 1998 will go down in movie history as the year of the come shot. Solondz's picture, finely performed though it is, suffers from an unquestioning assumption that there's something about everybody—that we are all lonesome wretches, if not practicing perverts. Does this really make us more interesting, or does it level us into precisely the sort of antlike drabness that Solondz laments in suburban life? Welcome to Incestopia. ♦

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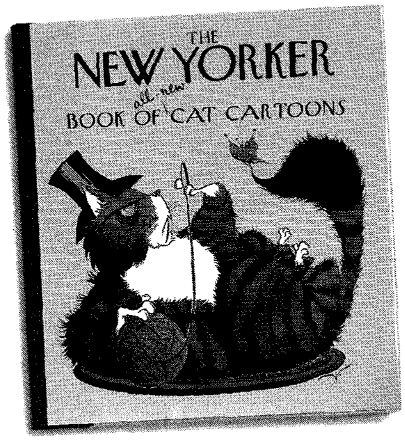

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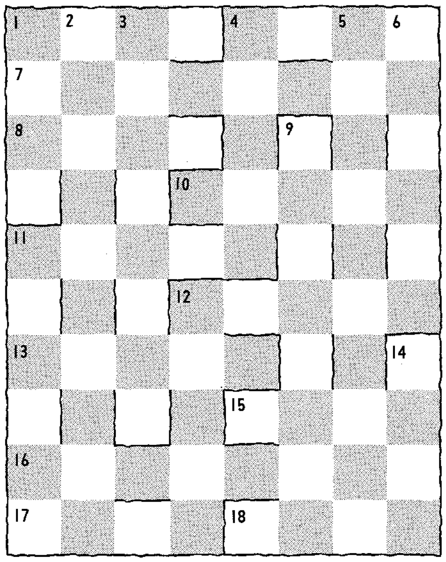

ACROSS

1 Knight eating bit of trail mix (4)
4 Drains hot tubs the wrong way (4)
7 Left school girl in European nation (8)
8 Authentic country dance called (4)
10 Movie actor shows gratitude after première (5)
11 Those folks' true successor (5)
12 Piece of veal covered with dull-colored sauce (5)
13 Returning work by English poet (5)
15 Sounds like primary part of a horse (4)
16 Incorporated Egyptian god as one (2,6)
17 In the sound: appropriate places for yachts (4)
18 Cash in one's chips at end of pot—it's a losing proposition (4)

DOWN

1 Nimble secret agent catches Republican (4)
2 Be obedient to one of the Kennedys in east (3,3,4)
3 Writer traveling via liner (3,5)
4 Boosted spaghetti-sauce brand's sweetener (5)
5 Upstart holding king and ace at end of game in upscale address (4,6)
6 Maudlin drunk in small gym (6)
9 No fair! A's going wild after game? (2,6)
11 "The South" is part of a doctoral student's work (6)
12 German invaders captured high school (5)
14 Take it easy in Empire State (4)

• •

The solution to puzzle No. 62 appears on page 75. For a free copy of "The New Yorker's Guide to Solving Cryptic Crosswords," please send your fax number or a stamped, self-addressed envelope to "Solvers' Guide," The New Yorker, 20 West 43rd Street, New York, N.Y. 10036. For an electronic version, send an E-mail to puzzleguide@newyorker.com.

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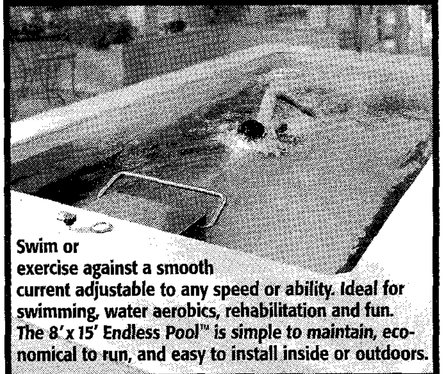

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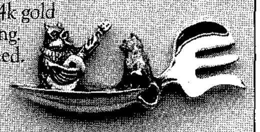

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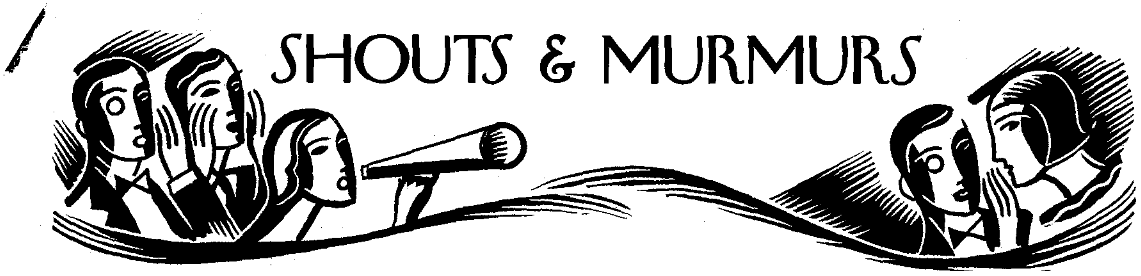


SHOUTS & MURMURS

PENNY-WISE, PENNY-FOOLISH

BY MARK SINGER

WITHOUT having seen an actual list of the exemplary individuals who are referred to in news articles as the "189 general partners" of Goldman, Sachs & Company, I've concluded that my name isn't on it. I infer this from several sorts of circumstantial evidence: I've never received an annual profit-share payment that I could use to buy that equatorial atoll I've had my eye on; after reviewing bids from exterminators, I was recently forced to try negotiating a voluntary troop withdrawal by the termites in my basement; my pennies collection means a lot to me. Early last summer, when I first read about a plan by the Goldman, Sachs partners to sell shares in the firm via a public stock offering, I sensed that my circumstances were poised for a sharp uptick. If I could acquire some stock, technically I'd become a partner of the hundred and eighty-nine general partners! Each of the general partners would pocket forty million or maybe two hundred million dollars in extra walking-around money. And it just stood to reason that that was good news for me, because . . . well, hey, we'd all be partners, right?

Then, the other day, the stock offering got postponed indefinitely—one of those "market conditions" situations—and I'm reviewing my options. As it happens, I have a long-term connection to a Goldman, Sachs partner, Lucifer Something (not his real name). Thirty years ago, when I was a college freshman, he lived next door. Lucifer was an excellent athlete, a tennis and squash competitor who was usually armed with a racquet and enjoyed testing the savage efficiency of his forehand on my furniture. Another trait I admired was that he was much smarter than me. The symptoms were unmistakable—typified, for instance, by his brilliant variation on the Magic Bag maneuver. The standard, classic Magic Bag maneuver involves stuffing one's soiled laundry into a large drawstring bag, smiling cryptically while shaking it for about ten seconds, pronouncing it clean, removing it from the bag, and putting it away. (Folding not necessary.) Lucifer's clever elaboration: whenever his mother came to visit, rather than allowing her to see that his bedroom was thigh-deep in toxic socks and underwear, he would usher her next door to my suite and I would humor her by seeming far less intelligent than her son.

Naturally, I wanted to be just like Lucifer, which is how I got started collecting pennies. One day, I noticed on his desk a pint jar half filled with pennies. I hadn't yet signed up for any extracurricular activities, and this one looked like it had growth potential. I wouldn't collect pennies for their numismatic value or even for their cumulative face value but just for the pleasure of having a bunch of something.

I once read that people who hoard pennies cause a problem for the United States Treasury. It's a problem for *me* only if I decide to move. During a move twenty-four years ago, I temporarily parked several coffee cans filled with pennies in my then father-in-law's basement. He took his stewardship seriously, and, on the chance that a plumbing crisis might erupt and an untrustworthy repairman who showed up to fix a leaky boiler might also try to steal my pennies, he hid them—so effectively that neither the potential thief nor I was ever able to find them. I dedicated myself anew to the endeavor.

So, how many do I have? Twenty-four years' worth.

I never want to be able to answer that question more precisely, because it would deprive me of the ability, whenever anyone asks me how much I'm worth, to give the cavalier reply "Honestly, I have no idea." And that, I feel confident, is the same response that Lucifer has given throughout his tenure as a Goldman, Sachs partner. A couple of weeks ago, before the stock offering got postponed, I called him to ask whether he still collected pennies, and he shocked me by denying he'd ever done so in the first place. I said, "Listen, I've got a closetful of pennies that I'm thinking of converting into Goldman, Sachs stock. You can level with me."

Nevertheless, he was adamant. "I never collected pennies," he said. "But, you know, I travel a lot, and it seemed like every time I changed suits I found this leftover stuff in the pockets."

Stuff?

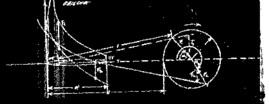
"Coins, change. I promise you it was never anything I thought about, but it would accumulate. I can remember a tennis-ball can full of change. Some of it was foreign. I don't know that I threw it out, but someone must have. Anyway, it disappeared."

Lucifer certainly didn't sound as upset as I felt when those pennies vanished from my former father-in-law's basement. What he sounded like was a guy who wanted to get off the phone, but he did have one question for me: "Well, so what do you do with your spare change?"

What I meant to say was "I amass vast holdings."

What I actually said was "I tend to spend it. Except for the pennies." ◆

ZOHAR LAZAR



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